Liberty

JAN. 11, 1947 10c

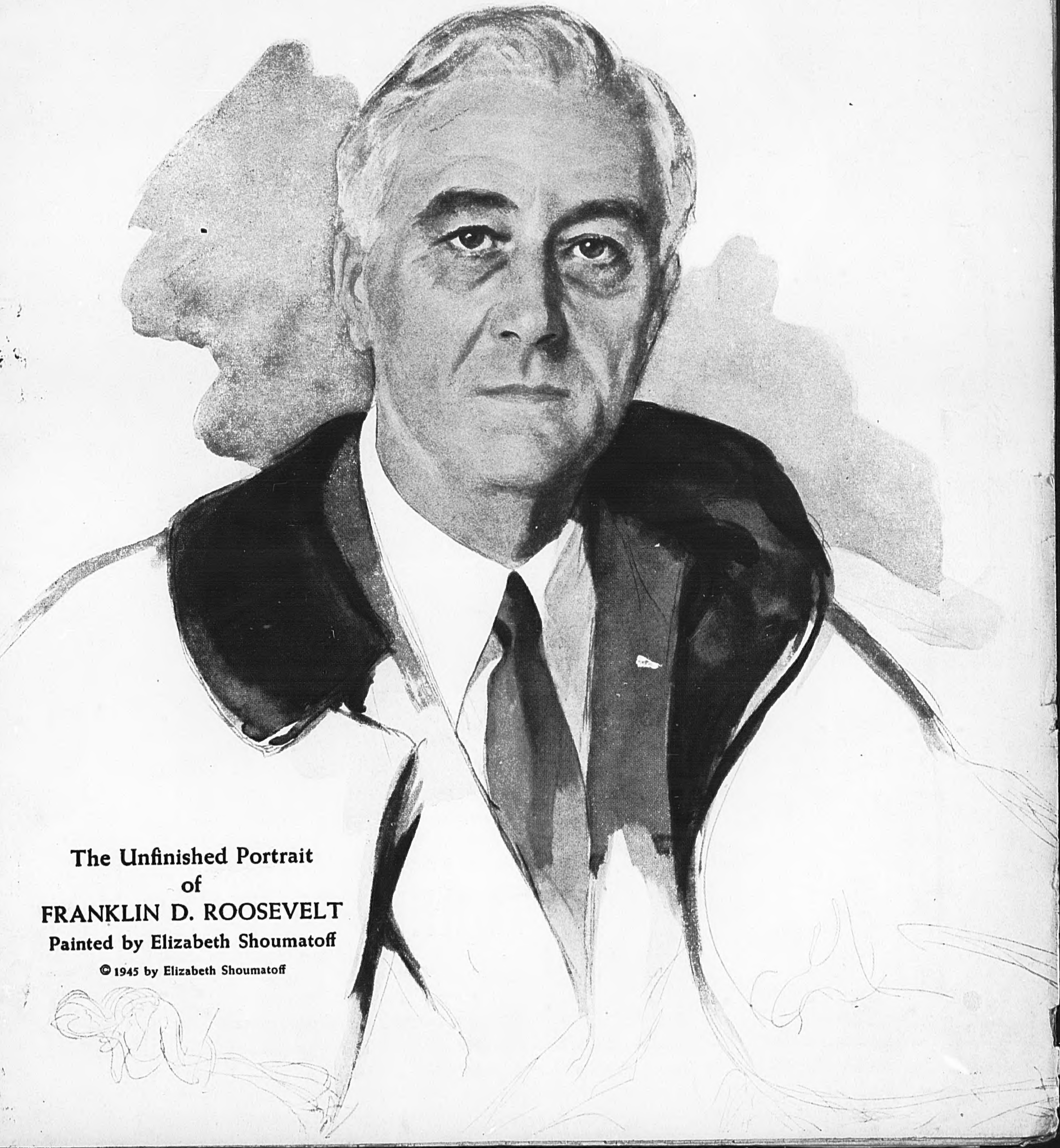
Starting:

F.D.R.'S BIGGEST FIGHT

BY ALDEN HATCH

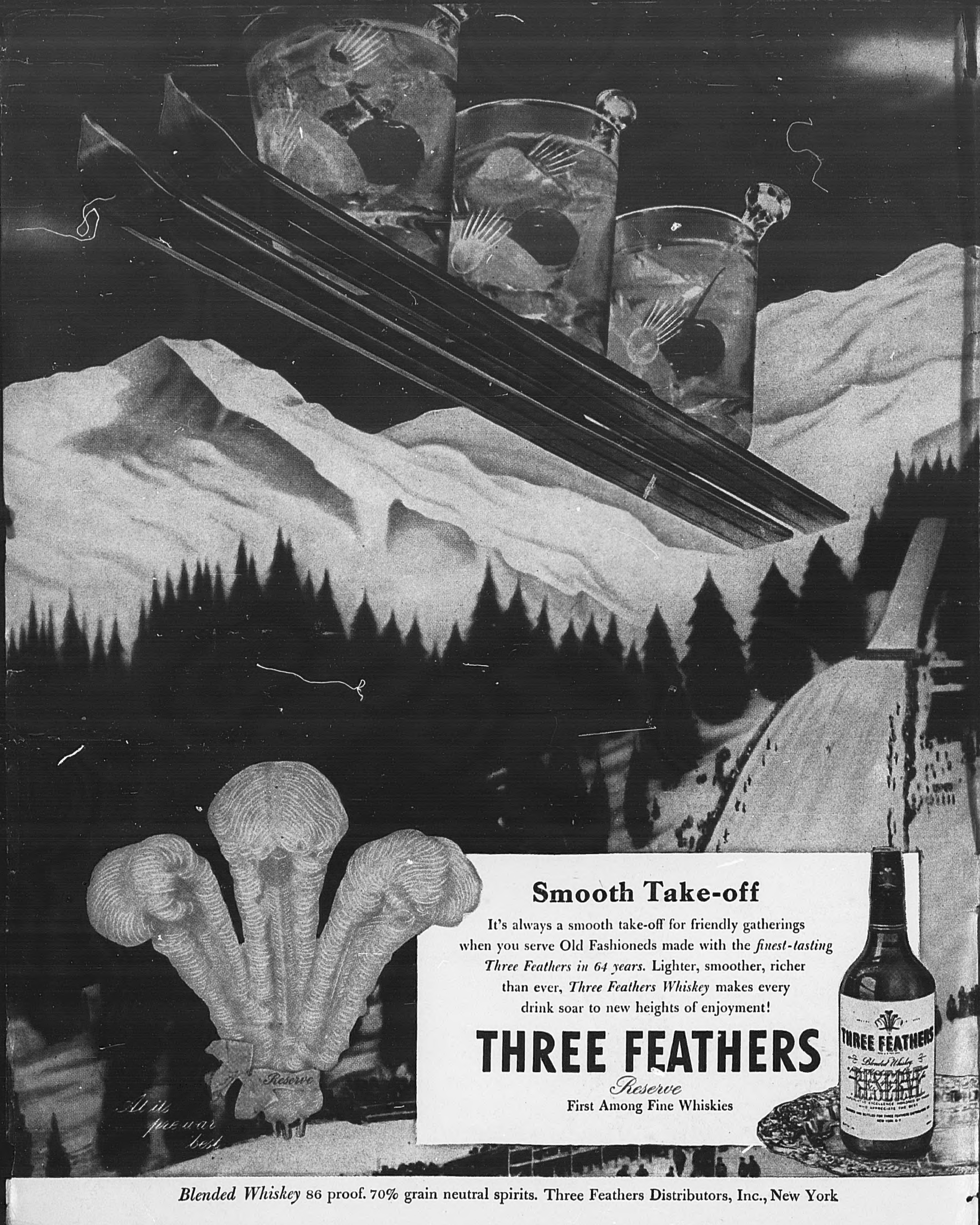
Book: FEAR NO MORE

Tense, thrilling mystery



The Unfinished Portrait
of
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
Painted by Elizabeth Shoumatoff

© 1945 by Elizabeth Shoumatoff



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b 140
c 240
d 14,000
e 240,000

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Cover: The Unfinished Portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt

Painted by Elizabeth Shoumatoff

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★ VOX POP ★

"The Voice of the People"

PLENTY TO SEE

APO, New York — Eleanor A. Slezak (Vox Pop, September 21) stated that there would be nothing in Europe to see, even though she could get there over the week-end. Well, I don't exactly agree with her.

When I first came overseas, I landed in France and, in the time that I spent there (only two days), I saw things that I shall never forget —women and children begging for left-over coffee and a few pieces of bread; collecting all kinds of left-over food that looked like garbage in just one container.—*John J. Cramsey.*

GUIDE BOOK
F C

Augsburg, Germany — There are lots of people who would like to spend a week-end with their brothers, husbands, and sons overseas. I think Eleanor Slezak is a little mistaken.—*Pvt. G.*

BLACK MARKET

Culver City, Calif. — Evidently the contractor Morris Markey interviews in Black Market in Houses (November 30) has got out of the habit of dealing with responsible hardware dealers. It *isn't* necessary to deal with black marketeers.

Members of the Southern California Hardware Retailers Association have done a creditable job in supplying the finished hardware needs for veterans' housing—and at OPA prices.—*Jack Skoog.*

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY

San Francisco, Calif. — Leopold Stocker (Vox Pop, December 7) is way off the beam. He seems to have forgotten the old adage that all work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy. Just because people are drinking cocktails and going to night clubs doesn't mean that the country is going into a decline. It's a known fact that people who work hard also play hard, and I won't worry about this country as long as people can still have a good time. —*T. R.*

LOOKING BACK

Jamaica, N. Y.—Years ago, real band music was popular everywhere, whereas today, while radio presents fine programs of swing music, popular music, opera, and symphony, there is no concert band music at all. Would it not be a nice idea if radio networks would feature a big concert band on the style of old bands of years ago, such as Sousa's, Cappa's, Gilmore's, Pryor's, etc.?—*George Durst.*

LOCAL PRIDE

San Carlos, Ariz.—I would like to correct Violet Eaton Putnam's mistaken idea in her article, High-flying High (November 16). She states that Anahuac, Texas, was the first and is the only high school in the United States to teach high-school pupils to fly in the school's own planes. Globe High School, Globe, Arizona, has been teaching its pupils to fly (if they wanted to learn) for many years and still is teaching them. It uses its own planes and airport and now has a fully equipped Link trainer set up to make the course as good as possible. —*Bill Linn.*

PRAISEWORTHY PROSE

New York, N. Y.—I feel I must congratulate you on publishing the book condensation of such a gay and civilized story as Through Purple Glass, by Letitia Preston Osborne (November 30).

The prose is suave, amusing, always in good taste—and yet a riot.—*Alice Mainwaring.*

CIRCULAR HOUSES

Los Angeles, Calif.—What has become of Richard B. Fuller's circular home, which can be produced by airplane factories at the rate of 500,000 a year at a price of $3,750 and shipped anywhere?

There is a waiting market for 20,000,000 of these. Our new Congress should shake up the ineffectual FHA. These houses can be produced for life-saving purposes just as fast as those planes came along for purposes of wholesale murder.—*Pearl Crosby.*

COLOR-BLIND?

Porterville, Calif.—In Isabella Taves' story, A Husband for Julia (November 23), the heroine was supposed to wear a red dress; yet in the illustration she has on a violet dress.

What's wrong? Are your artists color-blind?—*Joy Wilson.*

GREAT DANE

Flushing, N. Y.—According to the very interesting article, Suave Sender (November 30), by Betty Etter, Carl Brisson "makes no secret of the fact that he is fifty-one." Further along, the article states that "Mrs. Brisson is his wife of thirty-five years." What! Married at sixteen?

He certainly is a "Great Dane."—*Mrs. Gloria Cole.*

Carl Brisson *was* married at sixteen.—Vox Pop Editor.

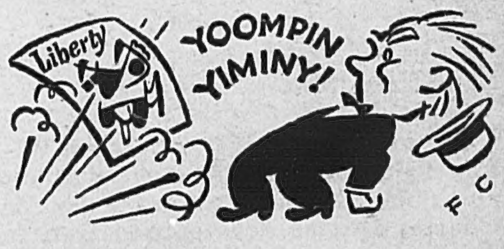
THE EYES OF TEXAS

Collinsville, Tex.—In regard to Charles Davis' article, When You Call 'Em That, Smile! (November 23), we all know that an Okie answers when one yells "Sooner!" and that the answer comes from up Ohio way when the word is Buckeye. But the article was a bit incomplete. There are, you know, thousands who drawl the answering "Yeah?" when "Longhorn!" is the cry.—*M. L. M.*

LIBERTY GETS AROUND

Bergen, Norway — Once upon a time—this sounds like a story, but it is not—I wrote to Vox Pop from Bergen, Norway (in 1936 or '37) to tell you how popular your magazine was.

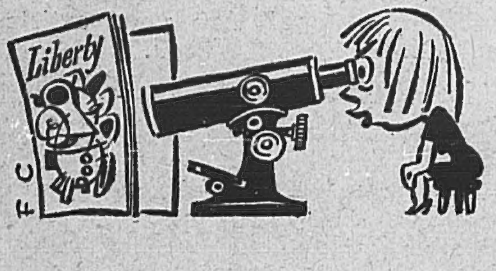
On August 5, 1939, that copy of Liberty was found in the ruins of a Chinese house in Tientsin, China, after a Japanese bombardment, by a Norwegian in American service. He happened to be a friend from my childhood. He cut out this little letter of mine and carried it with him for many years.



First thing after the war, he mailed it to his only sister in Norway, saying he would come home as soon as he could. That was the first she had heard from him in ten years. —*Nanny Hiorth Meland.*

HARD ON THE EYES

Los Angeles, Calif. — Your cute trick of putting white type on black paper, as you did in Darkness—Our Worst Killer, by David Brown (December 7), cost me ten dollars. I went right to the eye doctor to see if there was anything wrong with my eyes, because all the type was running together. It may look nice, but, please, if you want your articles read, make them easy to read.—*Vivian L.*



FOREIGN TRADE

Denver, Colo.—Bill Q., who deplores our sending stuff to Europe while there are shortages here at home (Vox Pop, December 7), is taking the short view of things. We've got to build up trade now, shortages or no shortages. If we wait for plenty first, the other countries will make their trade agreements and we'll be out in the cold when we need their trade.—*John R.*

TREACHERY IS TREACHERY

Chicago, Ill.—Ralph P. ought to look up the definition of treachery in the dictionary. He seems to think (Vox Pop, December 7) that just because the Communists are traitors to their respective countries for principle and not for money, they're all right. Well, I don't agree. Anyone who puts the interests of another country above those of his own is a traitor. And that hits Communism right on the noodle.—*Harriet P.*

SPIRITUALISM

Stevens Point, Wis.—Is it not unfair to attack any religion without an unbiased investigation thereof, as Charles Dexter does spiritualism in Ghosts Over America (November 30)?

He mentions the New York Spiritualist Leader as stressing the "'necessity for undercover activity to protect the mediumship from the "surveillance of the law."'" What he failed to mention was that the Leader constantly stresses that all investigators demand "test conditions" and absolute control over all phenomena and the immediate elimination of all questionable mediums. —*Wilbur F. Hull.*

PSYCHONEUROSIS

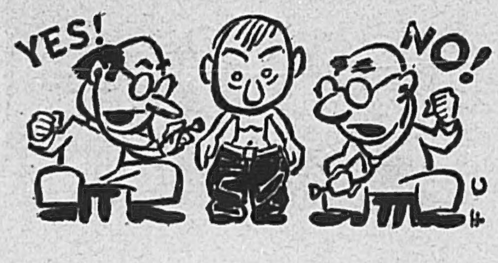
Williamson, W. Va.—"A Veteran of World War II" (Vox Pop, November 23) calls the psychoneurotic service-connected pensioners "incompetents, goldbricks, lazy men, and cowards."

But claims for pension, regardless of whether they are for psychoneurosis, organic disease, or injuries suffered while in the service, are reviewed by a Board of Medical Examiners as well as the Adjudication and Rating Board at regular intervals to determine entitlement to pension.

For the information of this veteran, let me state that there could be very few instances of people drawing pensions who are not entitled to the little they get.—*Michael M. Kolendo.*

Salina, Kans.—For the benefit of the veteran who scoffs at psychoneurotic veterans, here is a statement by a well-known New York psychiatrist:

"The Army has never freed itself from the confused notion that psychoneurotics are malingerers—fakers. This notion is incorrect. But the reverse is true—malingerers (of which there are surprisingly few) are usually seriously disturbed people."—*A Veteran of World War II.*



Fort Worth, Tex. — Occasionally some make-believe neurotic fools one of the army or navy psychiatrists, but it's very seldom. Even then he receives little if any pension.—*H. G.*

SOCIAL MYOPIA

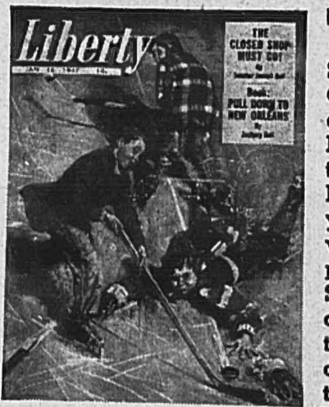
New York, N. Y.—Paul Hunter's editorial, Do High Prices Justify Higher Wages? (December 7) is so biased, it's amusing. His unqualified answer of "no" proves that the poor man is suffering from social myopia. If high prices don't justify higher wages, then high wages don't justify higher prices, and I'm quite sure that Mr. Hunter would balk at that logical process of thought.—*G. P.*

JUST BETWEEN OURSELVES

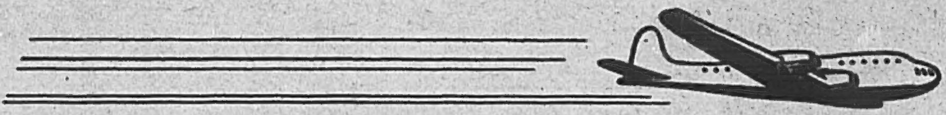
F. D. R.—IN WORDS AND PICTURE

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S fight against infantile paralysis was doubly memorable: first, for the part it played in making the man who became President and left an indelible mark upon history; second, for the inspiration and hope it brought to thousands of other polio victims. F. D. R.'s BIGGEST FIGHT, the little-known story of this dramatic personal battle, starts this week on page 9. The author, Alden Hatch (the well-known biographer of Willkie and Eisenhower), probably knows more about Roosevelt than any other writer. He had wanted to do the biography ever since he changed his mind about F. D. R. (he was once a Roosevelt-hater). He steeped himself in Rooseveltiana; talked for days with the President's family, friends, and advisers. After fourteen months he really knew his subject, "the vivid, amusing, cynical, idealistic, brave, and farsighted gentleman who was President of the United States." . . . Elizabeth Shoumatoff, the celebrated portrait painter whose unfinished painting of Roosevelt appears on the cover, was called to Warm Springs four days before the President's death. She found him optimistic about the future. The most striking thing about him as a subject, she felt, was his eyes. She was working on his forehead and hair that morning when he looked up, saw the butler with the luncheon table, and said, "We have just fifteen minutes more to work." A moment later he had crumpled in his chair.

NEXT WEEK



THE CLOSED SHOP MUST GO! says Senator Joseph H. Ball, author of the bill to outlaw it. . . . Can you guess what happened when a Sears Roebuck catalogue got to Russia? Eddy Gilmore, of the Moscow Bureau of the Associated Press, gives you the answer in "AMERICA, WHAT A COUNTRY!" . . . Liberty's Book Condensation, PULL DOWN TO NEW ORLEANS, by Zachary Ball, is the thrilling story of romance and intrigue on the Mississippi.



ON THE BEAM

BY WAYNE PARRISH

Planes swifter than sound? Yes, once problems are solved—tough ones! Here they are, as outlined by NACA's executive secretary

WHAT are the possibilities of really high-speed flight? What are the problems to be solved? What will high-speed airplanes look like?

There's a government agency, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, that is looking for the answers to these questions. It was established in 1915, and consists of fifteen members appointed by the President. Members, all serving as such without compensation, include the heads of the Army Air Forces, Naval Aviation, Civil Aeronautics Administration, Bureau of Standards, Weather Bureau, Smithsonian Institution, and six scientists or aeronautical authorities chosen from the aircraft industry and from private life.

The NACA, as it is called, operates three research laboratories containing equipment valued at more than $85,000,000 and employing 6,000 people.

The three plants are the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory, Hampton, Virginia; Ames Aeronautical Laboratory, Mountain View, California; and Aircraft Propulsion Research Laboratory, Cleveland, Ohio.

John F. Victory, NACA's executive secretary, recently discussed some of the problems surrounding high-speed flying, and the progress being made. With the development of the jet engine, "we now do not see a limit to the amount of power that can be provided for aircraft propulsion," Victory said. But he went on to say that changes are going to have to be made in the construction of airplanes, and from his remarks it seems that the resulting planes aren't going to look like anything that is flying today. "It appears certain," he said, "that really high-speed flight is going to require extremely thin air foils, perhaps of such radical form as diamond or 'double-wedge' shapes, circular arcs, or some other unconventional sections."

There will be a "definite necessity" for the development of new alloys to be used in supersonic aircraft, he stated. Even present extremely high-strength alloys, when overloaded past their elastic limit, simply explode in a shower of pieces, without warning. "The structure of the high-speed airplane of the future must be enormously stronger, yet lighter and of small dimensions."

Airplanes will probably fly normally at speeds either below 600 m.p.h. or above 800 m.p.h., at least until more scientific data become available that may permit steady flight in the "transonic region," Victory said.

This transonic region is one of the puzzlers in aviation today. The speed of sound is about 760 m.p.h. in summer heat, and about 660 m.p.h. in the cold atmosphere around 40,000 feet.

When the airplane approaches the speed of sound, its pressure impulses which move at that speed cannot move ahead and prepare the way for the passage of the airplane, so that these pressure impulses, instead of being propagated forward of the airplane wing, build up into shock waves which cause a tremendous increase in drag or resistance.

AS Victory explains it, in this transonic area between 600 and 800 m.p.h., air flows over some portions of the airplane at a speed lower than the speed of sound, and over other portions at a speed higher than the speed of sound. This mixture of subsonic and supersonic air flow presents enormous difficulties of stability, control, lift, structural strength, and power required. These difficulties are important ones that must be overcome.

And, as if the researchers didn't have enough problems, they're going to have to figure out some way of keeping pilots or passengers or both cool in high-speed airplanes. They've discovered that there is a tremendous heating action of air friction against wings and fuselages. Even in the Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star, the pilot's cabin heats up 50 degrees higher than the outside air at a speed of 550 m.p.h. And tests have shown that at the speed of sound a rise in temperature of 150 degrees will be reached.

"And," Victory adds, "at speeds greater than that of sound, these friction temperatures will exceed the limits of human endurance, increasing more than 360 degrees at twice the speed of sound. To solve this problem, investigations of different methods of cabin refrigeration involving extremely light-weight and compact units are now in progress."

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JANUARY 15-30

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F.D.R.'S Biggest Fight

BY ALDEN HATCH

Starting the little-known story of Roosevelt before he became President — how Fate's sledge-hammer blows forged a mighty spirit that wouldn't even take paralysis lying down

PART ONE

IN 1920 the Democratic ticket, headed by James M. Cox and Franklin D. Roosevelt, suffered a resounding defeat. America wanted Harding and normalcy by 404 electoral votes to 127. The only bitterness Roosevelt felt was at the repudiation of the League of Nations. "It will break the hearts of the world," Wilson had said. It seemed more likely to harden them to cynicism and selfishness. In domestic affairs Roosevelt took a long view: reaction had won, but it was a negative principle; the next swing would go all the further ahead. That would be the time for accomplishment, whether it came in four, eight, or twelve years.

Personally, he was glad to have escaped the ambiguous place of Vice-President; glad to be free for a little while. The children were growing up: Anna was an intellectual young lady of fifteen; James was in his second year at Groton; Elliott was a headstrong boy who needed a firm hand; the other two were old enough to be companionable. Good kids, all of them. He'd have time now really to get to know them; to teach them to sail and hunt and fish; explore their minds and offer them a few things he had learned. What fun they'd have! The years ahead looked good.

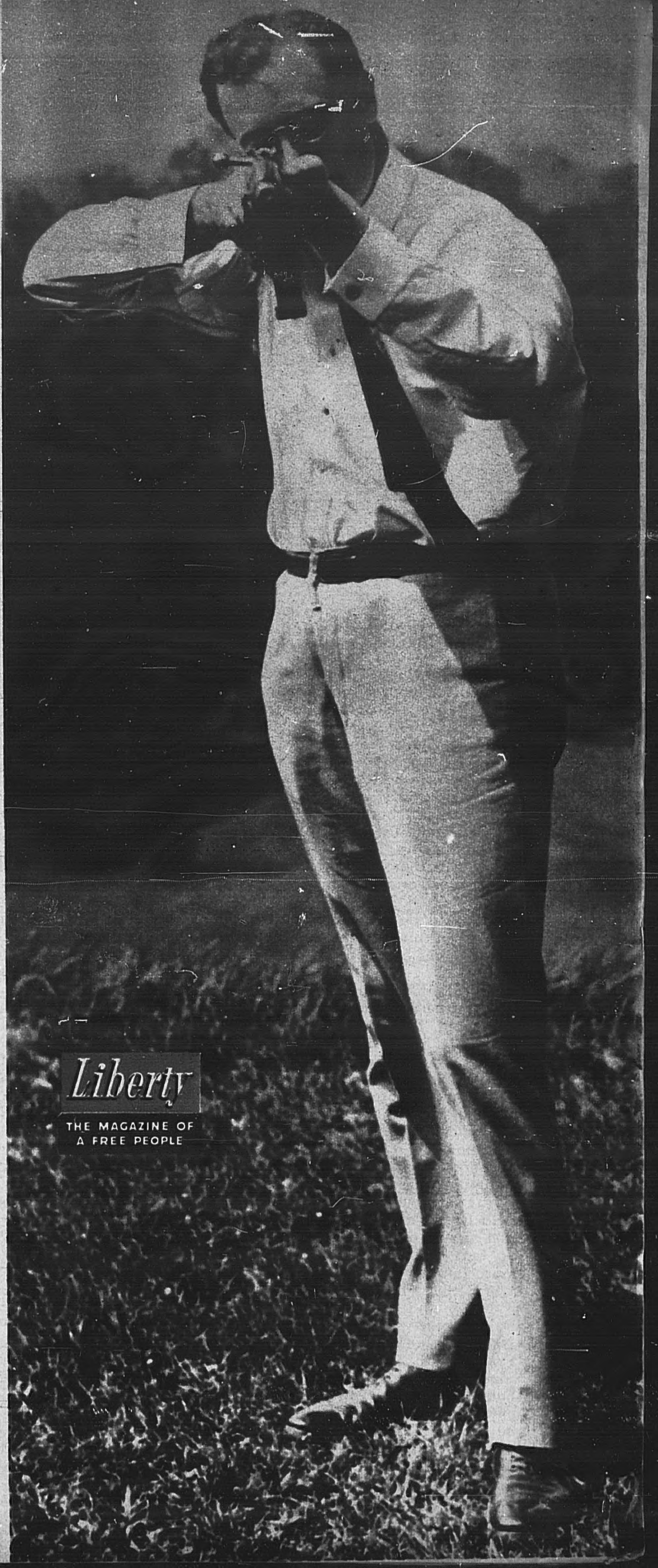
First there were a lot of odds and ends to clean up. Eleanor needed someone at Hyde Park to help her to take care of the campaign's aftermath correspondence.

"What was the name of that sweet girl McCarthy had at headquarters?" she asked. "She'll be out of a job now. We might get her."

"Missy LeHand — Marguerite," Franklin said. "That's a good idea."

"I'll see if she can come for a few weeks. . . ."

Missy stayed with them throughout all of the


Liberty
THE MAGAZINE OF A FREE PEOPLE

INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTO

In 1920, a year before his illness, a robust, athletic Roosevelt was shooting near Hyde Park.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTO

"Is Pops sick?" Franklin, Jr., asked, that fateful summer of 1921. He stands on his mother's left. The others are "intellectual" Anna, John, and "headstrong" Elliott.

tremendous years, until her death.

Franklin wound up the campaign affairs, gave each of his aides a set of cuff links—the Cuff Link Club—and saw Louis Howe off to Washington, where he was going to finish out his term at the Navy Department. That was a sad parting, for Franklin had become very fond of the little man through years of close companionship. But Louis Howe had his own career to make; he'd get a good job somewhere; they'd lose touch. . . .

It would be selfish to try to hold him. Franklin thought he would not need Louis again for a long time.

ROOSEVELT took his first stretch of freedom in a hunting trip to Louisiana. Then he came back looking for a job. His old law firm of Marvin, Hooker and Roosevelt had been revamped. Grenville Emmet had kept it going while the other members were serving their country, and for this reason the name was now changed to Emmet, Marvin and Roosevelt, Harry Hooker dropping out.

But law work was never able to hold Roosevelt's imagination, and he cast about for something that would at once be more interesting and more lucrative. His good friend Van Lear Black had a suggestion. The Fidelity and Deposit Company of Baltimore was thinking of opening a New York office. Black thought that Franklin Roosevelt would be a good man to head it; his executive ability had been proven in the Navy Department, and his connections would be invaluable in bringing in new business. So Franklin became a vice-president after all—of the Fidelity at a salary of $25,000 a year.

JULY in New York was particularly disagreeable that year of 1921. The sky hung low with the heat haze and the muggy air dripped with humidity. On July 30, Van Lear Black's graceful yacht Sabalo anchored off the New York Yacht Club dock. Her owner's first concern was to call on his new business associate.

"How are things going, Frank?"

The vice-president blew cigarette smoke at the ceiling and grinned. "Fine, Van. We've got a lot of new accounts. I'll bet our turnover will be half a million within a year."

"That's great," said Van. "I knew you'd be good. But, say, you're looking pretty peaked. Working too hard?"

"It has been a bit strenuous," Franklin admitted. "First unscrambling the navy, then the campaign, and now two jobs at once. Still, I'm doing all right."

"You don't look it," Black said bluntly. "How about coming with me for a cruise in Sabalo?"

Franklin's eyes became as blue as though they were reflecting the wide sea on which his imagination dwelt.

"That sounds grand," he said, "but I don't know that I should leave things here quite yet."

"You'll be no good to us if you get sick," Van pointed out. "Come along. Boss's orders!"

Roosevelt laughed. "Where are we going?" he asked.

"I don't know," Black admitted. "Anywhere is good, so long as you're on a boat."

"You said it!" Franklin exclaimed. "But how about going up to Campo and staying with us there?"

"Dandy!" said Van. "I'd love to see your earthly paradise, and it will be somewhere to go. We'll sail tomorrow about five."

Van Lear Black and his party stayed for several days at Campobello, and the island was engulfed in gaiety. When they sailed away, Franklin turned to his children, who were waving from the dock.

"Tomorrow we'll have a picnic," he said, "and the next day we're going off on that camping trip we've talked about so long."

THE next day, August 10, 1921, the whole family went out in the Vireo, a small sloop Franklin had bought to teach his sons to sail. On the way home James spotted a thin column of smoke rising from a little island off Campobello. It fattened as they watched it.

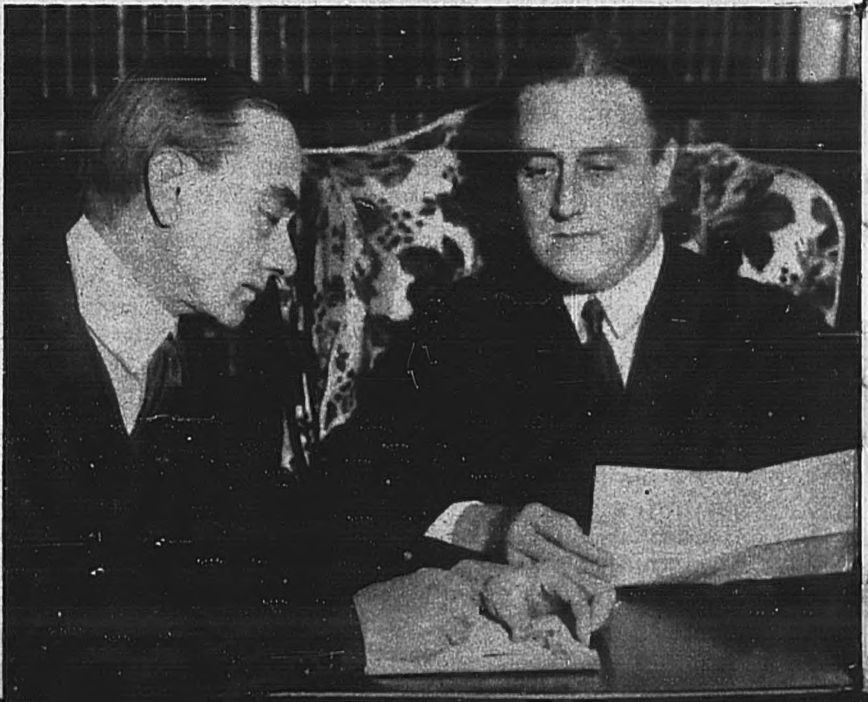
"Forest fire," Franklin said. "Ready about!"

He put the helm down and Vireo tacked and headed for the smoke. They made her fast to a jutting rock and scrambled ashore through shallow water, carrying a broom, shovels, and boat cushions to beat out the flames.

It was a brisk two hours' work. By the time the woods were safe, all the Roosevelts were dripping with sweat and grimy with smoke. Eleanor looked as though she were made up for a minstrel show, and Franklin's handsome face was streaked black and white. The boys were unbelievably dirty.

Governor Roosevelt with Louis Howe, whose deft hand helped guide his chief to recovery and the highest office in the land.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTO



Vireo got home fast down the wind. They stowed the sails and hurried ashore.

"Who's for a swim in Lake Glen Severn?" asked Franklin.

Everybody was, except Eleanor.

"I'll race you across the island!" Franklin shouted. "Last one in's a rotten egg!"

His long legs carried him to an easy victory. Never pausing, he went headfirst into the landlocked lake. Four splashes followed him; little Johnny was inevitably the rotten egg. They had great sport in the water, and then ran back.

"Let's take one dive in the bay," Elliott suggested.

"O.K., but only one. It will be awfully cold."

Fundy was cold. Freezing! The chill seemed to strike right into Franklin's liver. He got out quickly and, calling the boys, ran to the house. The muscles of his legs felt sore; he hadn't thought he had gotten that soft in New York.

The mailboat was in and a stack of letters lay waiting. Franklin picked them up, saw several important letters, and dropped into a veranda chair to read them. There was a long one from the Fidelity—things were going well, but his advice was needed. Then came another from Marvin. Franklin shivered a little as the wind blew cold on his wet bathing suit, and sniffled, but kept on reading.

A violent sneeze broke his concentration, and he realized that he was shaking with cold. He got to his feet feeling suddenly sick, and started inside. At the foot of the stairs he saw Eleanor.

"You look blue, Franklin," she said. "Get out of that wet suit."

"I seem to have a chill," Franklin muttered between clicking teeth. "Guess I'll go to bed with a hot drink and let you send my dinner up."

"That's a good idea," Eleanor agreed.

Franklin, Jr., hurtled down the stairs.

"Is Pops sick?" he asked anxiously.

"He thinks he may have caught cold," Eleanor answered.

"You'll be all right for the camping trip, won't you?"

Franklin leaned over the banister.

"Sure I'll be all right, Frankie. It'll take more than a little cold to stop me."

THE next day he was really ill: a high temperature and aches in every joint. It felt like influenza, and Eleanor sent for their old friend Dr. Bennett, from Lubec. He decided that Franklin had a bad cold. The children were sent off on the camping trip in charge of Mrs. Sidney Sherwood and Mrs. Louis Howe, who was staying at the house with her young son. Eleanor settled down for a spell of nursing.

KEYSTONE PHOTO

Roosevelt at his Hyde Park home thirteen years before he moved to the White House.

Franklin woke very early the next morning, feeling terribly ill. His head was hot, and his back and legs ached deep in the bones. Languidly he got up and went to the bathroom. It was surprising how weak he felt. As he started back for bed, one leg gave way quite suddenly and he fell to the floor. He called to Eleanor, who helped him to get up and stagger back to bed. Then she sent for Dr. Bennett again.

This time he looked very anxious. It could be a chill accompanied by a partial collapse, he said. It might be an acute form of rheumatism. But the spinal cord seemed to be affected. That was grave indeed, suggesting the possibility of meningitis. There was even an outside chance that it was poliomyelitis.

"Infantile?" asked Franklin incredulously. "Could I get a baby disease like that?"

"It's possible," said Dr. Bennett, "though extremely unlikely. I should like to have a consultation."

Louis Howe arrived from Washington, his face drawn into yet more saturnine lines by worry. He found that Dr. W. W. Keen was at Bar Harbor and would come over. Next day Louis and the Roosevelts' old island friend Captain Calder went to the mainland to fetch him.

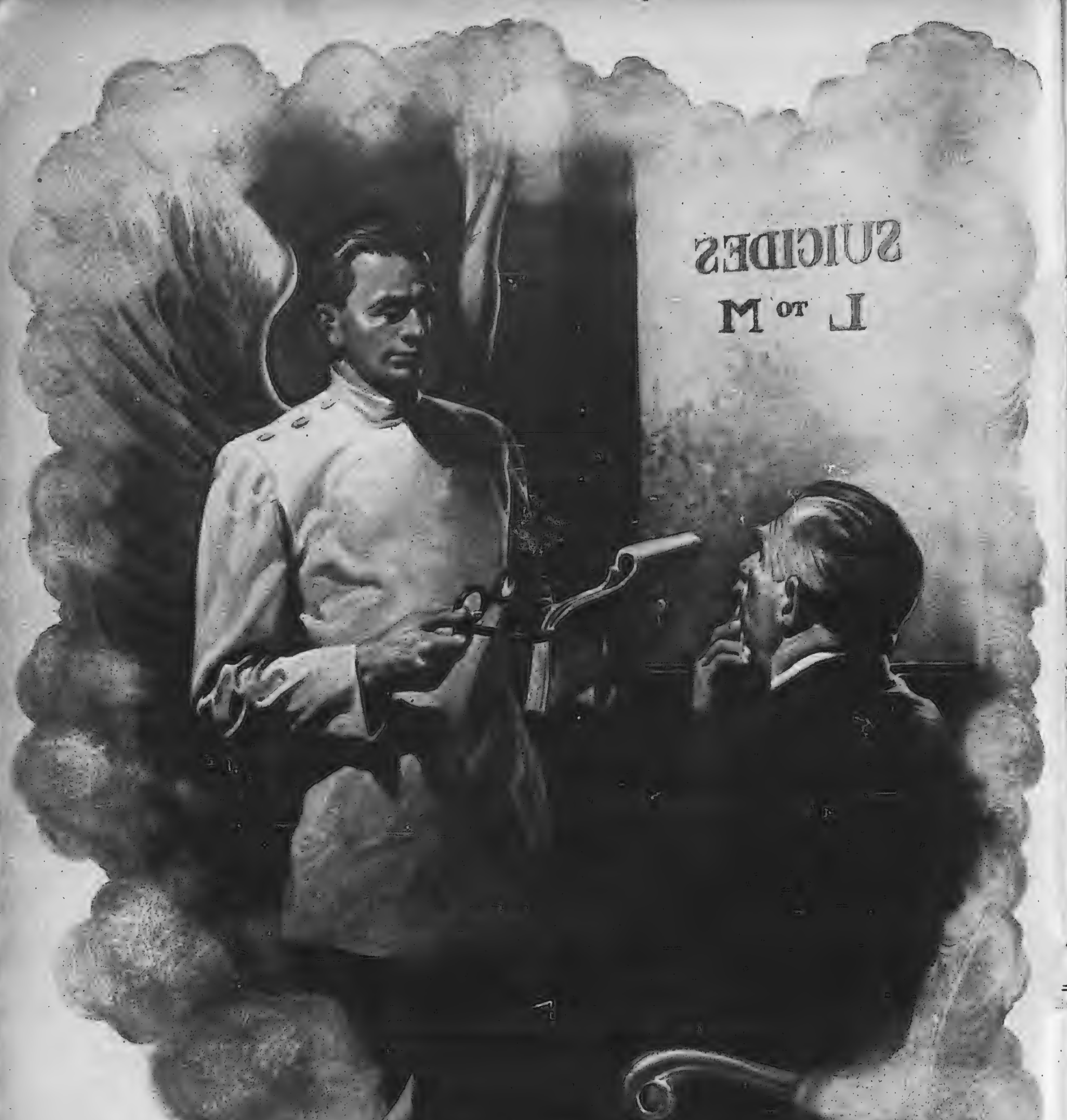
OLD Dr. Keen was baffled, too. Certainly it was some form of paralysis, possibly polio. But, if so, it was fantastically bad luck for a man of thirty-nine. They could only wait and see. He recommended massage and careful nursing. There was no nurse on the island, but Eleanor was good at it by now. She slept on a couch in her husband's room and was never beyond the reach of his voice. Louis was completely devoted. Day by day and night by night he read aloud to Franklin, helping to ease the long hours along.

"Shouldn't you go down to New York and start on your new job?" Eleanor asked him.

"I've given up the job," said Louis. "Franklin needs me."

The days passed like worms crawling. Franklin was getting

(Continued on page 48)



ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GODWIN

Mr. MacAfee was annoyed by the wings. He looked at them. "If they're phony," he muttered, "so is the rest of him."

MR. MacAFEE RETURNS

Mr. MacAfee's erring soul lacked humility. What better way to acquire it than in the body of a cocker spaniel?

BY ROY WHITTIER

WHEN Elfin Lady of Geckwold whelped her fourth pup, the soul of Mr. MacAfee passed into it. Mr. MacAfee was conscious of his reincarnation; and this was not at all according to plan.

Indignant, Mr. MacAfee tried to spring to his feet, but his legs spread-eagled slowly until his stomach rested on the floor. If this isn't an asinine position for a fifty-year-old investment banker! he thought. I'd like to get my hands on the angel who bungled this transmigration.

All he had sought a few hours ago was oblivion. A confirmed disbeliever in life after death, he was certain when he placed the automatic against his temple and pulled the trigger that it was to be the end of everything.

So it was disconcerting to find himself in a room with "SUICIDES, L to M," lettered on the door. For a moment he thought he'd bungled the job, and this was a hospital. Certainly the man who entered looked like a resident physician, except that he had wings. Mr. MacAfee was annoyed by the wings. He gave them a more searching look, hoping to discover wires or straps that would prove them false; but he shook his head. "If they're phony, so is the rest of him," he muttered.

"They're real," said the man who wore them.

"I was afraid so," sighed Mr. MacAfee. Then he said, "I guess you know I was an atheist?"

"Naturally," said the man with the wings.

"I suppose that will count against me."

"Not at all. We don't mind atheists; we have no trouble converting them."

Mr. MacAfee tried to make the next question casual: "Ah--outside of that, how do I stand?"

"Wretchedly," said the man. "We abhor suicides. We work on a planned production basis, so we reserve the right to set the date of your death. And we are not ready for you."

"Do I go to hell?" asked Mr. MacAfee glumly.

The man looked at him. "That's as stupid a belief as your recent atheism. You're going back to earth to live out a normal life and die a normal death."

Mr. MacAfee looked startled. "When my friends see me, how will I explain my funeral?" he asked.

"You're not going back as *you,*" the man explained. "You will assume a different form—to be specific, as man's best friend. I believe the expression is 'Man's best friend is his dog.' "

"But I loathe dogs!" screamed Mr. MacAfee.

"That's the chief reason you're going back as one," said the man. "Poetic justice, we call it."

"What kind of dog?" Mr. MacAfee asked dejectedly.

"You have a choice of three: a Pekingese—"

Mr. MacAfee shuddered.

"—a Mexican Chihuahua—"

"Oh, my God!" groaned Mr. MacAfee.

"We frown on profanity," said the man.

"I'm sorry," apologized Mr. MacAfee querulously. "Let's have the third choice. It can't be as bad as the other two."

"How would you like to be a cocker spaniel?" asked the man.

"Not at all!" said Mr. MacAfee. "But I prefer it to the others."

"Then we're ready to go to the transmigration room. Will you come this way, please?"

Mr. MacAfee had no sooner stretched out on what looked like an operating table than he sat bolt upright again. A horrible idea had occurred to him.

"Will I know I'm a dog?" he asked. "I mean, will I know I'm a man while I'm living this dog's life?"

The man reassured him: "You'll know nothing of your former existence until you return here."

"When will that be?" asked Mr. MacAfee.

"When you have developed some of the finer qualities, such as humility and unselfishness," said the man. "You see, we hope your experience as a dog will help you spiritually. Now if you will lie down, please, my nurse will administer the anesthetic. I'm sorry the regular anesthetist isn't here, but it's his day off."

THE nurse had slipped a cone over his face. That was it, he thought glumly as he rested on his round spaniel stomach. The man had definitely promised that he would know nothing about this dog business. The nurse had balled things up. Why had he had to shoot himself on the regular anesthetist's day off?

He'd like to see that damn-fool nurse for just a minute. He'd like to see— All of a sudden it occurred to him that he couldn't see at all. This was the last straw. Born blind. Doomed to grope his way through life in darkness. No one would want a dog that couldn't see.

"But their eyes are closed!" said a little girl's voice near by.

"Oh, their eyes won't be open for ten days," said a woman's voice.

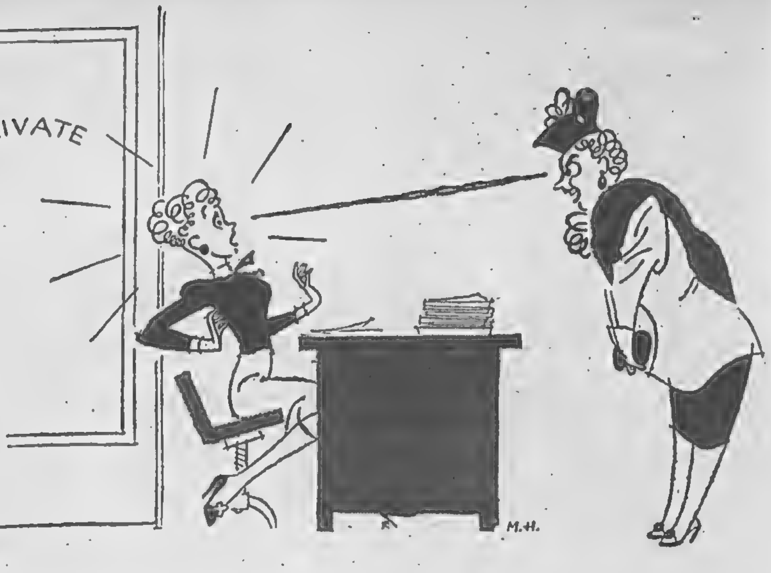
Mr. MacAfee had forgotten that all puppies are born with their eyes closed. He supposed he could just eat and sleep until he could see what was going on. It occurred to Mr. MacAfee that he was hungry.

"Why isn't that one eating?" the little girl's voice asked.

"Would you like to lift him over so

(*Continued on page 62*)

A Private Secretary Tells All



What goes on between the boss and his pretty secretary? A "nine-to-five wife" gives you the surprising low-down

BY BEA BOLEN

I SUPPOSE the wifely suspicion that papa has a pretty gay old time at the office has existed ever since slave girls took dictation with a stylus on wax tablets. If secretaries were chosen solely for their beauty and charm, as slave girls were, the modern wives who feel that they are throwing their husbands each morning to the Wolf Gals might have cause for suspicion.

It sounds downright anatomical to say, "Take a cross section of the American business girl." But if you can do it, you will find that while she is attractive and well-groomed, she is no Lorelei. She's a practical soul who knows that to cast herself in such a role would be very poor business.

And as far as the average business man is concerned, my observation—and a secretary has plenty of opportunity to observe—is that there is something actually terrifying to him about even a mildly predatory woman in his office. Just let him look across the desk and see a gleam in a girl's eye, and he is immediately torn by twin desires—one to run like hell, and the other to have the girl transferred to another department, but quick.

I blame most of the wifely fears as to office shenanigans upon that overworked word "propinquity." Why propinquity is supposed to ignite the tinder of love just because two people work together from nine to five, is beyond me. It is much more likely to inspire the secretary to say, "If the boss doesn't stop playing the piano on his desk while he dictates, I'll tear out my hair and screAM!" Conversely, the boss may feel that if he hears just—one—more—time that irritating little cough his secretary gives at regular intervals, he will jump out of the window or cut her throat with the paper knife.

I have been a secretary for some years, and I have worked in a lot of offices. In all of them there was the usual run of business men. We secretaries discussed them freely. We had all their numbers and classifications: the desk-thumpers, the mumblers-around-cigars, the four-o'clock Mussolinis (late dictators). And we had their wives classified, too. Those who came in only when necessary and then were friendly and natural, we loved, and we cheerfully copied guest lists, addressed invitations, and would even shop for them during our lunch hours.

But occasionally we would get what we called a "slummer." This is the wife who is suddenly seized with an intuition that there is something going on down in Jim's office. She decides to see for herself and, dressed in her most devastating costume, she bursts into her husband's office. She smiles dazzlingly upon one and all, but under the false gaiety there is a lot of cold calculation going on. I've been on the receiving end of some of those glacial glances.

This is the type of wife who resorts to the Disparaging Word. "I don't think much of that Miss X," she will say. "She wears her clothes too tight, and she's got sort of a bad look in her eye." She forgets that there are many men who will look to see just *where* Miss X's clothes are too tight, and if the "bad look" is cast in their direction.

One of the things that causes a wife's lips to tighten is to have her husband telephone that he will be late to dinner. Instantly visions of a softly lighted restaurant with the wretch bending toward some lovely girl, whom he has of course met at the office, appear before her eyes. When he guardedly insists that he can't make it, she instantly surmises that That Woman is standing near by. Finally she hangs up in a rage, and her Gay Deceiver goes back to the conference where the Big Boss is pounding his desk and howling for higher production and lower costs.

Another, and legitimate (I think), reason for the late-to-dinner business is the atavistic masculine desire to flee all feminine society. It attacks most men occasionally, and they fall a willing victim to the suggestion of having a quick one with the boys after work. The intention is to have just one drink and then catch the five-forty-five, but they decide to pour the second libation upon the altar of male independence. The five-forty-five is missed, of course, and the wife must be telephoned.

Above all, though, there is nothing quite so upsetting to the suspicious wife as to have her husband come home and say, with a feeble grin, "Well, they're having the Office Party next week, and I suppose I'll have to go." The little woman immediately pictures him dancing like a faun, drinking like Bacchus, and entirely surrounded by scantily clad office houris. What she should say at this point is, "Of course you'll have to go; it's part of your job, and—who knows?—you might have fun."

I have attended dozens of office parties, and dreary things most of them are. For some reason, about once a year a paternalistic virus infects the air of the Front Office; the Big Shots decide to do something for the BB shots to lift their morale and inspire them to do and die for Dear Old Corporation. The Word goes out, and is received in various ways. Some say, "Oh, hell!" and others say, "Oh, good!"—But whatever the reaction, they all know they're expected to be there, ready to run the gamut of gaiety from the schottische to the rumba. And any wife who considers it a treat to rumba with Dear Old Corporation as anatomically personified by a third vice-president can take my place!

SPEAKING as the girl behind the typewriter and the eight ball, the best advice I can give is that after you get that coffee-flavored kiss in the morning, just forget your breadwinner. In the first place, business is for the support of wives and families (and that's good); and in the second place, it's to keep men out from underfoot all day (and that's better!).

Speaking of husbands, just wait till I get one! Oh, yes, I'm looking—but not around the office, my dears. He may have faults, bless him, but they won't be the same old ones I've been gritting my teeth over across the desk. And I shall keep my illusions about him by never meeting his secretary. In her eyes he'll have clay feet right up to his shoulders.

THE END

Among My Souvenirs

Most of the souvenirs you buy come from a fabulous firm that calls the tune for a multimillion-dollar industry

BY KEN JONES

SAUL GOLDFARB

WHY do Americans buy souvenirs? For three reasons, says Saul Goldfarb, head of a fabulous New York institution known as the House of Goldfarb: First, to prove that they've been somewhere. Second, to ease the disappointment of the loved ones left at home. And, third, for nostalgic contemplation in the dim years to come.

Goldfarb can speak with authority, for the House of Goldfarb is at the top of the souvenir heap. Production is not only a multimillion-dollar industry supplied by the nation's largest manufacturers and processors of raw materials, but the lines of supply reach out to nearly every part of the world. United States consuls everywhere are alert for souvenir raw material which they keep rolling to the House of Goldfarb in a steady stream—back scratchers from China, wood carving from Czechoslovakia, figurines from France.

Saul and his brother Phillip, both in the souvenir business for nearly a quarter of a century, have recently led the industry through a major revolution.

First, the slogan twenty years or so ago was "If it's useful, it's no good!" Today, a Goldfarb souvenir *must* be useful. If Saul Goldfarb can find no possible usefulness in an otherwise attractive item he attaches a thermometer to it somewhere. Anywhere.

Next, mass-production techniques have robbed 99 per cent of souvenirs of even the most tenuous material relation to the points where they are purchased by tourists.

The Goldfarbs have in stock or in production at all times between 1,000 and 1,500 separate items. Staples include ash trays, salt and pepper shakers, plastic banks, cigarette boxes, paperweights, letter openers, powder boxes, perfume bottles, compacts, pennants, lighters, knives, buttons, Indian trinkets, a dizzy assortment of trick merchandise, a whole separate catalogue of leather items, and specialty items such as miniature boxing gloves and roller and ice skates for sale at championship prize fights, ice skating or roller carnivals, etc.

This bewildering mass of merchandise reaches the ten-floor House of Goldfarb in a raw or semi-finished state. It is immediately broken up into smaller lots, and the process of its conversion into "souvenirs of Carlsbad, New Mexico" or some other tourist Mecca gets under way. If the item is made of glass—an ash tray, for instance—a full-color lithograph of some scene from the Carlsbad Caverns is processed on the under side. Otherwise, the attachment of a printed card usually is enough to do the trick. Printed attachments are especially useful in the special-events end of the business, and it is a literal fact that no large event of national or even only sectional interest goes unmarked by souvenirs.

Saul Goldfarb likes to recall the time when the American Legion held its annual convention in Paris. The Goldfarbs dispatched the better part of a full shipload of souvenirs across the Atlantic ahead of the Legionnaires and their ladies, who picked the little items up all over the French capital and lugged them back home.

Although the production of souvenirs is very big business indeed, (orders for 250,000 compacts are routine in the Goldfarb office) the final retail disposal of souvenirs often reaches extremely small proportions. Five Goldfarb salesmen cover the country, and any one of them will set up his full exhibit for a gathering of five or more dealers. The longest sales trip is 10,000 miles, and all souvenir salesmen travel by automobile, because often the wide places in the road are their most important souvenir outlets.

Goldfarb customers range all the way from the State of New Hampshire, which buys and sells its own souvenirs, to thousands of operators of hot-dog stands and taverns in the hinterland. Washington, D. C., New York's Radio City, and Niagara Falls are the top souvenir spots in that order.

It is unlikely that even the most fantastic proposal for a special souvenir will ruffle Saul Goldfarb's habitual calm. The only request he's had to decline recently came from a gentleman who wanted a picture of his house processed on his recently removed gallstones!

Shells are among the most popular items. It takes thirteen separate operations to transform "raw" shells into acceptable souvenirs. Over a period of years the Goldfarbs have accumulated a special collection of unusual and exotic shells, including clam shells weighing 100 pounds or more each. These are not sold, but are rented to retail merchants to be used in seasonal window displays. Not long ago the firm received a special award from the American Museum of Natural History for an exhibit of shells from its stock.

Two of Saul Goldfarb's souvenir items have hung up records which few in the business expect ever to see surpassed. The first, early in his career, was the "nutshell mailer," an accordion-pleated series of views that telescoped into a real or simulated walnut shell for mailing. The more recent major Goldfarb creation (1941) was the "key to the city" idea. From a souvenir standpoint the "key" idea has *everything.* It permits great mass production, provides space for the addition of a local picture and a thermometer, has a good sentimental idea behind it, and can be successfully retailed as a "one coin" souvenir.

While some sonvenirs, especially compacts and leather goods, often retail for several dollars each, the backbone of the industry is the "one coin" item which retails for a dime, quarter, half dollar, or dollar bill.

THE END

Bombs from the Blue

BY ROSCOE FLEMING

Twenty-five million meteorites come screaming earthward every day and would destroy us but for the "roof" over our planet

THE meteorite shower on the night of October 9, 1946, scared and thrilled people more than any since the great shower of 1883—when fireballs lit the sky all night in glares brighter than the sun, so that millions of Americans wept and prayed under the open heavens, sure the world was ending.

But in 1946 the rumor and fear were rather that an atomic-bomb invasion had started. This was not far wrong, for meteorites sweeping through space pack more explosive punch than anything known to man save nuclear fission.

Further, although only on extraordinary occasions do they smash their way into our consciousness, 25,000,000 of these screaming missiles are aimed right at us and our planet every twenty-four hours.

They drill in at us like supernal bullets, at a speed we can never match—about twenty-six to twenty-seven miles a second. Overtaking earth from behind, they smash at it at seven to eight miles faster than its orbital speed; when they hit it head on, they come at us at more than forty miles a second or about 150,000 miles an hour.

This estimate of 25,000,000 daily includes only those meteorites so large that we can see their fiery death with the naked eye. Billions daily are mere flecks of cosmic dust. They wink out of existence in such brief and feeble fire that even on a moonless night we cannot see them.

If meteors smash at the earth at such fantastic speeds as 150,000 miles an hour, why don't we read daily of houses pierced, skyscrapers knocked down, and people and animals killed by such terrible missiles? Why don't we spend our time dodging and worrying?

First, because 25,000,000 daily are actually not very many cosmic bullets against such a huge target as our earth. Our planet has almost 200,000,000 square miles of surface, so on the average a "large" meteorite—one the size of a rice grain, at least—hits during each twenty-four hours, somewhere in the atmosphere over every eight square miles.

And besides, nature has evolved us under the most perfect shelter that can be conceived—our atmosphere. It is like armor plate, but much better than the best armor plate we could devise, which would inevitably be pierced.

Our atmosphere "gives." It is elastic enough so that if the meteorite is not burned up, and if it is not too big, its terrific speed is gradually slowed down to about that of a stone dropping from a great height, so that within certain limits of size, weight, and composition, meteorites which do reach earth bury themselves only a few feet.

They cool off very quickly after their fiery flights. Indeed, frosts have sometimes congealed on them when found, a sign that the terrific cold of outer space has not been touched by the fiery blazing flight. How can this be?

People used to think that friction caused the fiery meteoritic glow. But most of the heat is caused by "piling-up" of the air on the meteorite's forward face, since it is moving too fast for the air to get out of the way. A gas heats on compression, and this effect is so severe here that instantly the fiery air is glowing like a bit of the interior of the sun, with a temperature that may be briefly in the hundreds of thousands of degrees. This in turn means that most of the radiation is in the ultra-violet, invisible to us. It also means that the time of flight is too short for heating-up of the whole meteorite, and that though its front may be burned away, the in-

Meteorites travel almost at the speed of light, but most of them are slowed and finally burned up by the friction of the earth's atmosphere.

terior, perhaps only an inch from that point, may never lose its chill.

The occasional giant meteorite, the monster or group of monsters with a mass up to many tons, is of course little impeded by our atmosphere. It smashes its way right down to earth, with loss of virtually none of its speed —and therefore virtually none of its energy. This energy is so enormous that when the meteorite is abruptly checked by the crust of the planet, much of its mass, together with much of the substance it has hit, is converted into an explosive of a power undreamed of before nuclear fission.

If it should fall at sea—and three fourths of all meteorites fall in or above the sea, simply because water covers three fourths of our planet —a truly large meteorite might create a tidal wave.

WE have some perfect examples of what it would do on land. Some 20,000 to 50,000 years ago an enormous radiance suddenly appeared one day—or night—over what is now the western United States. There was a hiss like that of a billion snakes, a roar and blasting concussion like that of the atomic bomb. Dust shot into the sky in a huge cloud.

When it had cleared away, there was a still-incandescent crater in the earth, nearly a mile across, with walls heaped several hundred feet high and a bottom some 1,400 feet, or more than one fourth of a mile, below the surface.

If there was animal or human life within fifty miles, it probably died instantly from shock; if forests, they were thrown down. Animals or humans within a radius of another 100 miles probably were knocked unconscious.

This was the great Arizona meteorite. The enormous crater, still extant, although filled in until it is now only 600 feet deep, is still our most sensational known example of the work of a great meteorite.

We say "known," because Dr. H. H. Nininger, our foremost meteoricist (who has recently established a museum at the Winslow crater with his collection of meteorites, the most extensive in the United States), believes that the oceans, vegetation, and erosion on land have masked from us the more ancient scars of even greater meteorites.

He points to the moon. Meteoricists are pretty well agreed that the moon's craters were formed by exploding meteorites of tremendous mass. There is no reason to suppose that the earth has escaped a similar bombardment in its two billion years of existence.

But three fourths of the meteorites falling here have fallen in the ocean. Craters caused by the rest have been masked by vegetation and erosion. One result of aerogeological exploration may be the disclosure of huge meteorite craters now taken to be normal features of the landscape.

One may ask why no meteorite falls have been observed on the moon, if it has been hit by so many. The fall of a huge meteorite there would be a sight beyond comparison. One really great meteorite on the average of each million years, during the two-billion-year history of our satellite, would more than account for its scarred face.

We could see only a little more than half of even these, since roughly two fifths of the moon's surface is forever hidden from the earth. Since men have been consciously and closely observing the moon only a few hundred years, the odds are greatly against their having observed such a fall.

Besides, the sun and planets have been sweeping up this cosmic dust heap like busy housewives for two billion years. It is probable they have intercepted most of the system's original supply of meteorites and meteoritic particles, so that falls are less frequent now. However, some meteoricists conjecture the solar system may run at intervals into huge clouds of matter in space, and so renew its supply of meteoritic material.

Most meteorites are much less radioactive than ordinary earthly rocks. This argues, by the evidence of the "radioactive clock" which shows the amount of radioactivity present, that they are older than our earth or indeed our solar system.

WHAT else do they tell us? It used to be said that there were only two messengers to reach the earth from outer space—light and meteorites. In the past few years we have had to expand the list to include cosmic rays, clouds of corpuscles from the sun, etc. But it can still be said that meteorites as messengers carry more meaning to us than anything except light.

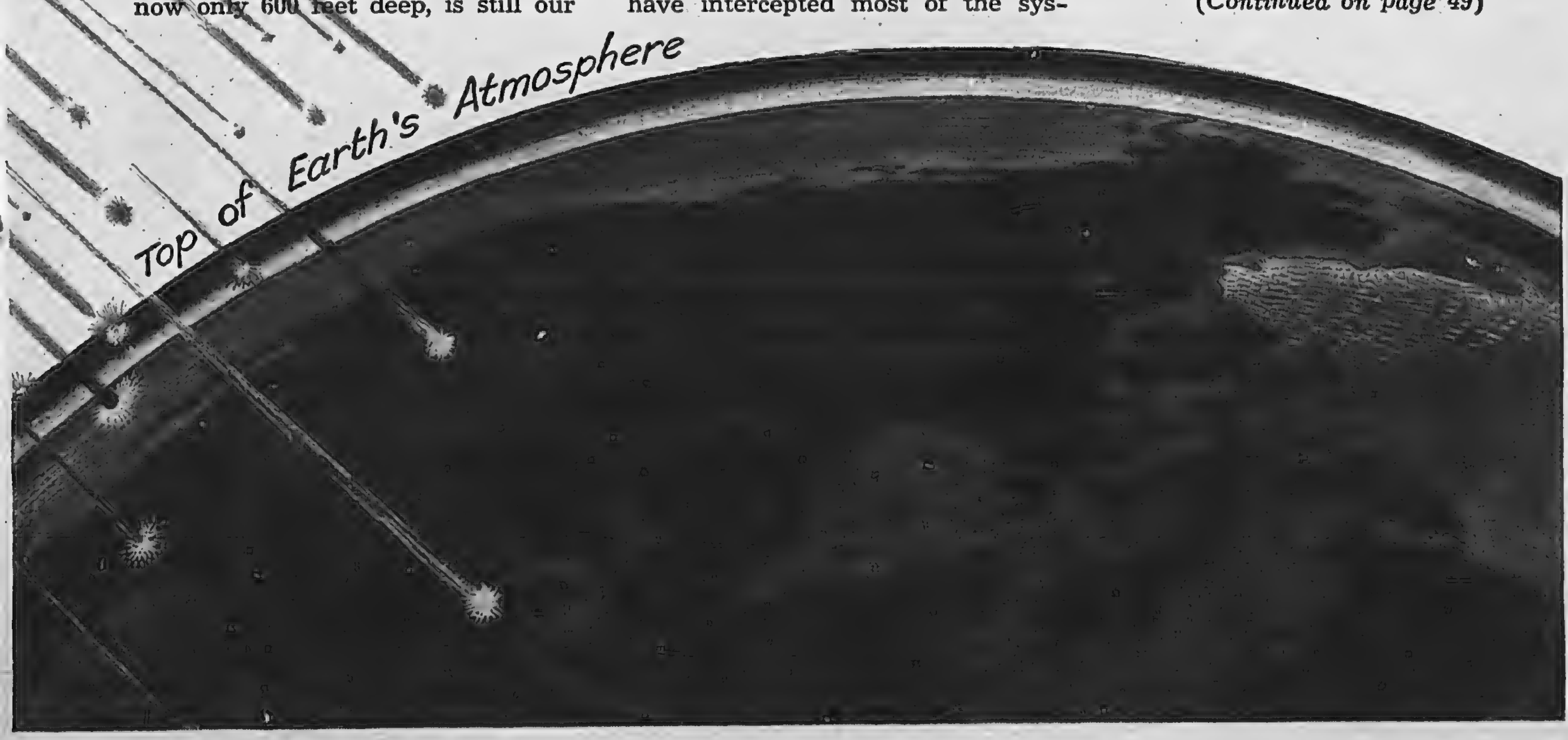
Here are a few things they tell us:

That they contain no trace of any except the familiar ninety-two elements which were all we knew until man began tinkering with nuclear fission. But there are dozens of combinations forming minerals formerly unknown to us, and some of these have been very useful, as providing guides to the formation of new alloys, stainless steels, etc.

That no meteorites ever found show any trace of planetary evolution, such as rocks that are sedimented or laid down by some unearthly sea.

About 10 per cent of meteorites are of a rugged nickel-iron composition with traces of gold, platinum, and other metals, and occasional tiny black diamonds known as carbonadoes. But none of these materials has ever been present in commercial quantities.

(*Continued on page 49*)



Singing for Shug

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. VAN SWEARINGEN

Liberty's
SHORT SHORT
STORY

Only a little boy knew why Grandma sang—and why Grandpa listened to her

BY RUTH McCOY HARRIS

"HON," Grandpa said to Grandma after dinner, "sing us a song now, will you?" He opened up the old foot organ for her, and right off the hound-dogs ran out to the back gallery and started to howl. They knew, all right.

"What will I sing, Shug?" Grandma asked, and got up and went over to the organ. I sort of wiggled around and blushed. I wasn't knee-high to a grasshopper, I remember, and I was sitting on the floor by the fire, because the grown folks had all the rocking chairs. It was a Sunday round about johnny-quill time, but still cool, and Grandpa had a fire going in the fireplace and a big stack of oak wood by the fireplace. I wiggled and blushed and tried to put my mind on the calendar picture on the wall; it was a picture of a pretty lady in a shirtwaist and a straw sailor hat. It was purely embarrassing how Grandma and Grandpa carried on, him always calling her "Hon" and her calling him "Shug." Kissing, too. Right before all of us.

"What you want me to sing, Shug?" Grandma asked again. She was a little bitty woman, kind of like a chippy sparrow, her eyes just as bright and her motions quick. You could rightly expect her to have a little bitty voice, sweet but gingery, like her.

I'm here to tell you that wasn't the way of it at all. You could hear Grandma singing clean over to Uncle Willy Roper's any time, and that was when she wasn't really letting out. A voice big and coarse as a bull's she had, and—well, real distressing to hear.

"Sing Beulah Land, hon," said Grandpa, and he leaned back and stretched out his long legs and rested his hands on his stomach like he was fixing to enjoy a big turkey dinner.

I noticed my mother—she was a MacDonald and they all got music in them—she sighed kind of soft. That's all she did, but my father, he looked at her sharp. Grandma's boys thought the world of her, singing and all, and they made their wives and children sit still and listen and no complaining, not a word.

"I'll be drinking at the founting . . ." Grandma hollered at the top of her lungs, and Grandpa he sat there tapping his foot and not batting an eye when she flatted half a tone. Grandpa, the way he kept smiling at Grandma's little head a-jerking around like a bird's while she bellowed in a voice like the bull of Bashan, the way he sat there enjoying it, I purely thought he was crazy. He didn't need any ear to know how pitiful awful she sounded; all he had to do in this world was to look at our faces or even watch the dogs. They were on the gallery howling and baying like they hurt.

Well she sung Beulah Land, every verse, and a lot of others. Rock of Ages she sung, and for a change, I Love You Truly. When she sung this last one, she turned around and made moon eyes at Grandpa. I couldn't hardly stand to look at him making moon eyes back at her.

I SLIPPED out finally. I was in the barn picking me some peanuts off the peanut hay when Grandpa came out to feed the cows. I was just a little fellow, you know, so I just out and asked him.

"Grandpa," I said, "how come you always asking Grandma to sing when we come to Sunday dinner?"

Grandpa, he looked real funny. "What you mean, son?"

"I don't like to hear Grandma sing. It hurts my ears."

He started to frown, and I said, "It hurts the hound-dogs' ears too."

Grandpa had a right peculiar look on his face. I thought he was mad. Then he looked like his feelings was hurt. But after a little he got to smiling, and then he laughed out loud.

"Tell you the pure dee truth," he said, "it hurts my ears too, and has for thirty years. Terrible. But don't you tell it on me. Your grandma thinks she sings pretty, and I'm here to tell you she'll sing all she pleases and folks is going to listen to her. Just put that in your pipe and smoke it." He looked mad again and walked off to see about the muley cow, so I didn't ask any more questions.

BUT I wasn't near satisfied. I went on up to the house, and all the others was standing on the front gallery, about ready to go home. But Grandma was in the kitchen, icing me a big cookie with some left-over icing she had. Put a face on it the way I liked, with raisins for eyes. I declare, hadn't she already made one for Grandpa, special, too! It said "Shug" on it in pink icing!

"Grandma, you sure do like to sing, don't you?"

She frowned all up right away.

"How come you ask me, child?

"Well, you sing a whole lot, ever' time we come here."

"Don't you like Grandma's singing, honey?"

"It hurts my ears," I told her truthful, too young to have any better sense. "The hounds', too."

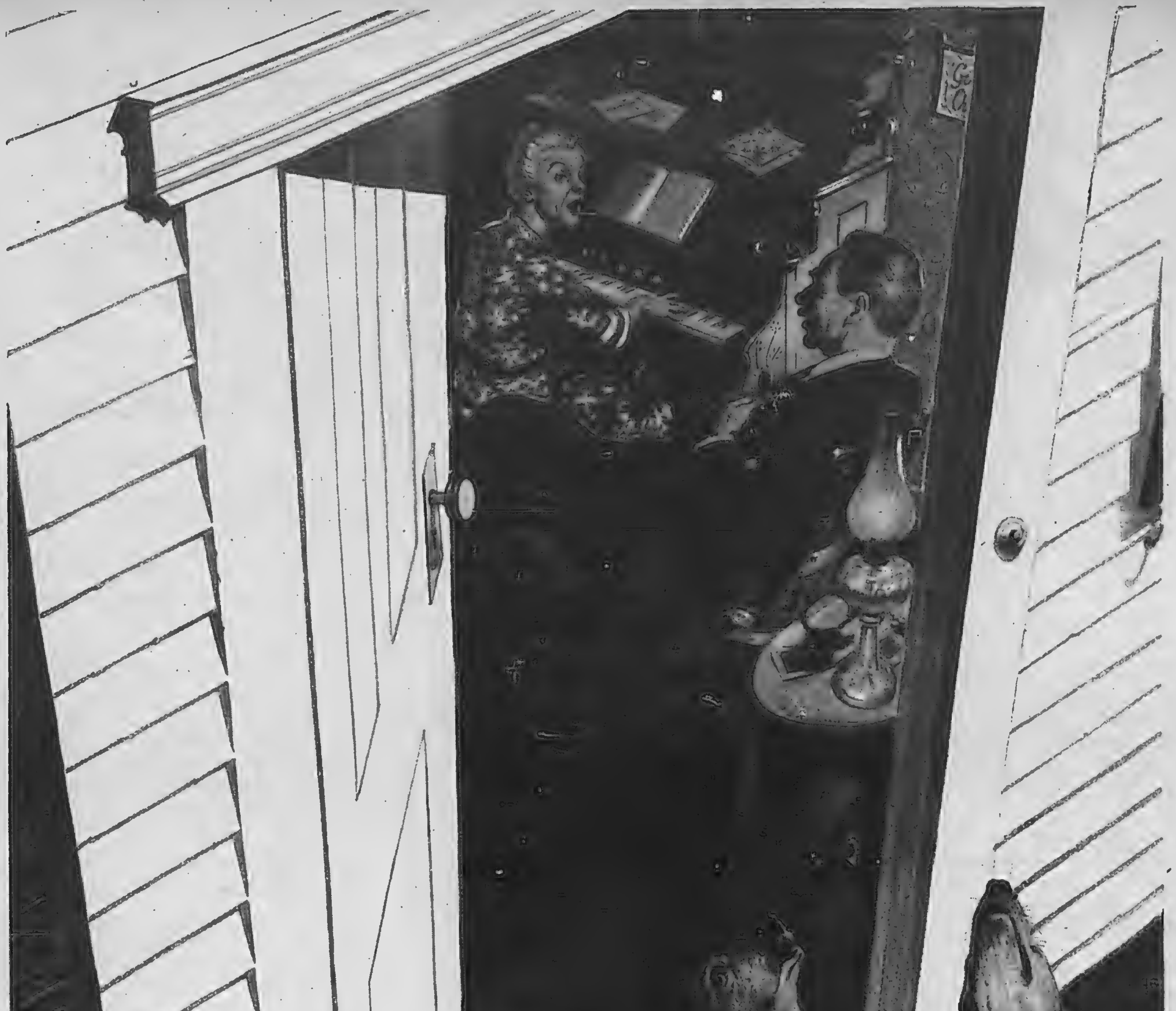
Grandma laughed until the tears came to her eyes and she had to wipe them on her apron.

"Well, now, I'll tell you, boy," she said. "And don't you ever let on to anybody. When your grandpa and me was courting, he always was asking me to sing. He seemed like he couldn't get enough of my singing; still can't.

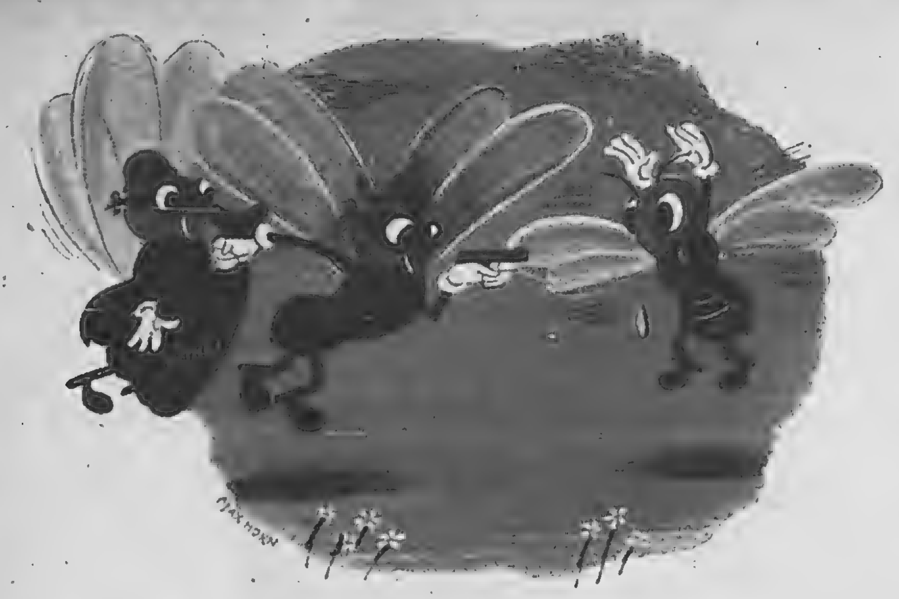
"Tell you the truth," Grandma stood there, gazing out to where Grandpa was standing, calling the spotted cow, "it's purely embarrassing to me. Your grandpa's got no ear at all. He don't know any better.

"I realize I sound like a buzz saw going through a light'ood knot. But I don't care what other folks thinks, not excusing you *or* the hound-dogs. *He* likes it, and I sing for Shug."

THE END



The way Grandpa sat there enjoying it, I purely thought he was crazy. He didn't need any ear to know how awful she sounded.



Outlaws of the Outdoors

From bandit bees to highly organized gangster gorillas, crooks and killers flourish in the world of nature, too

By D. E. WHEELER

NOW and then newspapers feature the story of a court condemning a dog to death for his crime against society. It is a reminder of medieval days when animals were brought to trial for their offenses. In those days pigs, allowed to forage the streets as scavengers, frequently attacked and sometimes killed babies left unattended. As the devil was believed to have taken "possession" of these beasts to accomplish his evil ends, the murderous swine were held for trial, given counsel for defense, and if found guilty were dressed in the clothes of a man and hanged on the gallows. Records show more than fifty sentences of death and excommunication against different creatures between the years 1120 and 1741.

Insects, it appears, have not only warred on man, but have been accused by naturalists of intentional criminal acts against their own kind. The busy bee that "improves each shining hour," for instance. Like men, some bees get tired of honest labor and organize themselves into marauding bands that kill the sentinels of a hive, overcome any citizens in it, and make off with the stores of honey. Success at it makes them bolder, and groups of three or four bandit bees will waylay a hard-working nectar-laden cousin in his homeward flight and rob him. Surrounding him, they make him disgorge ("Cough up, pal!"), and if he resists they pull his legs and pound his abdomen unmercifully.

Buchner, an authority who made a study of bandit bees, says that their cautious preparation and sly maneuvers in attack would indicate the *conscious* transgressor. He adds that honest bees may be transformed into thieves by feeding them a mixture of brandy and honey. "They cease to work," he declares, "and give themselves up to pillage and theft."

Equally industrious and socialized ants are well known as militant raiders, tearing the adults of another community to pieces and carrying off the young for slaves. As certain ant nobles must be groomed and fed if they are not to die of helpless aristocracy, slaves are an economic necessity.

Last spring the writer happened to witness a fight between two beautiful male grosbeaks over a female. The winner of the battle, after getting his rival weakened and wobbly on the ground, deliberately stabbed him to death with his iron bill. Murder may strike one as a pretty strong term to use in connection with birds, but any keeper at a zoo will verify their efforts to kill on occasion. William T. Hornaday, late director of the New York Zoological Park, made note of a pair of thrushes ganging up on a nightingale, and of some trumpeter swans bumping off a pelican they disliked.

Sparrows in a state of freedom will often ravage the nests of swallows, dumping the eggs or young to the ground and taking possession of the premises.

George J. Romanes, in his work on animal intelligence, has related how a pair of sparrows ousted a swallow couple from their nest behind a shutter of an empty house. The swallows apparently reported this outrage to their friends, for a flock of them plastered up the entrance of the nest so effectively that the female sparrow sitting on her eggs was sealed in a living tomb.

CROWS provide one of the most interesting examples of animal misbehavior and its correction from within. Those who have had tame crows know that they love to steal bright objects. In a wild state an asocial bird will steal choice sticks from the nest of an absent neighbor. Usually it is a pair of mated young crows that will be guilty. Discovered by the colony, the indignant members will speedily destroy the ill-gotten nest.

Which is in line with the extraordinary "crow courts" reported by reliable naturalists. The court is convened among the tree tops in an unfrequented woodland spot. For several days the birds assemble from all directions, and their clamor is continually excited until, at a given moment, they separate themselves into groups of three or four and wrangle. A curious feature observed is that several of the noisy flock may sit apart, listening silently, as if in judgment. The "court" may sit for an hour or two: then, seemingly with one accord, the crowd falls upon one or two crows and executes them. If you hear a long-drawn-out racket of crows and can get near enough to the wary genus, stop, look, and listen. You may witness a "court" in session.

VINDICTIVE justice is also a characteristic of storks. The male is most devoted to his mate, and extremely jealous.

Should the female flirt with a handsome gallant, she may pay for it with her life. Practical jokers of Smyrna, where they are familiar with the conjugal fury of the male stork, amuse themselves by putting hens' eggs in a stork nest. A cruel joke, for the male becomes infuriated at the sight of the strange eggs, and summoning the other "husbands" in the neighborhood to note the infidelity, tears his innocent mate to pieces.

Gorillas, chimpanzees, and baboons are notorious for their cleverly planned thieving, which was noted by Garner in the French Congo some years ago. The gorillas have a way of appointing scouts and pickets, and arranging signals before staging a raid on the chickens and pineapples of the natives. When everything is set, the big monks form a chain and swiftly pass the plunder from hand to hand.

Dogs, possibly because they live closest to man, have the dubious honor of being credited with using well-thought-out hypocrisy to conceal their crimes. The murderous sheep killer, a bloody assassin by night, is smart enough to be assiduous in devoted attention to his flock during the day. Herders who have watched a sheep killer's Jekyll-Hyde development, say that he can be shrewd enough to remove any such damning evidence as bloodstains or torn bits of sheep's wool from his coat.

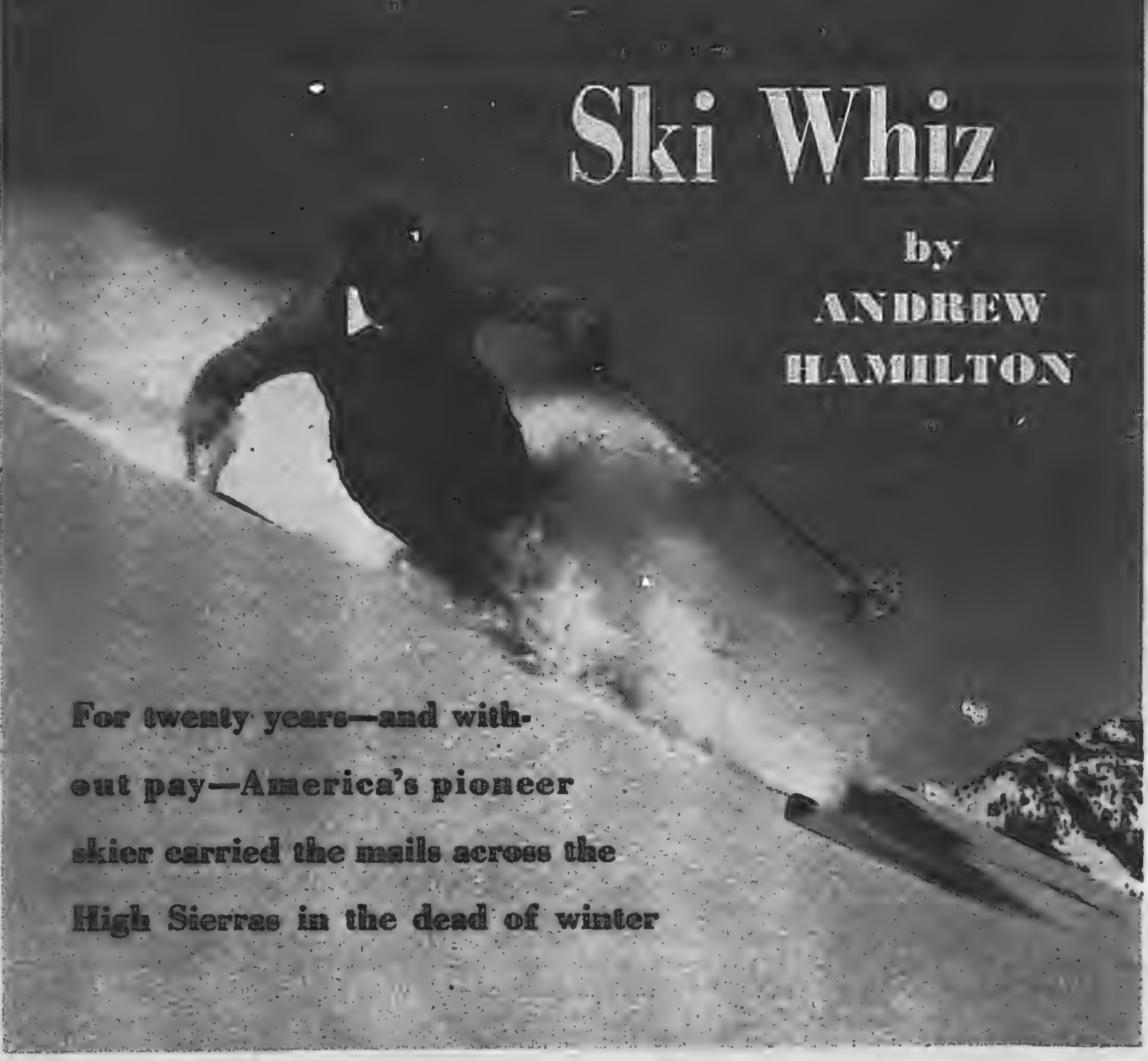
Smart? Almost human, alas!

THE END

Ski Whiz

by
ANDREW
HAMILTON

For twenty years—and without pay—America's pioneer skier carried the mails across the High Sierras in the dead of winter



NORWEGIAN-BORN John A. Thompson—better known as "Snowshoe" Thompson—was the grandpappy of American skiing, the spiritual ancestor of the present winter's 5,000,000 ski-happy enthusiasts.

Almost a legend now, Thompson was a strapping six-footer who toted the mail across the High Sierras between Placerville, California, and Carson City, Nevada, every winter from 1856 to 1876. When the drifted snows blocked all communication between California and the rest of the United States, he would grab his heavy sack of mail, give a wild Norwegian whoop, and set off on his ninety-mile journey.

Alive today, he probably would be our outstanding skier. As it is, he is merely a footnote to the saga of the West.

John A. Thompson was born at Upper Tins, Prestijeld, Norway, on April 30, 1827. Ten years later his parents migrated to the United States. At twenty-four, young John was caught up by the gold rush and carried from Iowa to California. He failed to strike it rich. He knew farming, though, and finally bought a small ranch on Putah Creek near Sacramento.

In the middle 1850s he learned of the difficulty of getting mail across the High Sierras in the winter. That started him thinking.

"When I was a little kipper, back in Norway," he reflected, "we wore snowshoes all winter long. . . ."

From a straight-grained ten-foot oak log he hacked two slabs four inches wide and two inches thick. Then he pointed the ends and steamed and bent them so they curved up. In the middle he nailed leather toe straps.

Thompson called his twenty-five-pound contraptions snowshoes, but in reality they were crude skis. When they were finished, he set out for Placerville, California, the western terminus of the Emigrant Trail. His childhood skill on skis quickly returned and soon he was sliding down the hills near Placerville, to the amazement of the population, who thought he had gone mad.

He carried a single wooden staff about six feet long, which he held horizontally like a tight-rope walker. By dragging one end on the snow, he could make quick turns and stops. Sometimes he straddled it and sat on it as he sped downhill.

One sunny December morning in 1856 he loaded a sack with seventy pounds of letters and packages and set off for Carson City—ninety miles to the east. Nobody expected him to come back alive.

The first sixty miles were tough going—from Placerville up to the 7,500-foot pass in the Sierras now called Echo Summit. When darkness fell, he sought a fallen tree trunk, cut pine branches to make a bed and shelter, and built a small fire which he kept going throughout the night.

At the end of the second day he reached Echo Summit. The evening of the third day he glided down into Carson City. The good citizens of that frontier town were dumfounded. Only the contents of the mail sack convinced them that he had really crossed the snowy passes.

After a few days in Carson City, he gathered up letters for the Pacific coast and set out for the Echo Summit again. This time it was easier going. It took only two days. Placerville was as astounded as Carson City. An impromptu celebration was arranged.

Thompson carried the mail across the mountains several times that winter. The following summer he returned to his ranch, but the next winter he was on the mail trail again. This continued for twenty winters without interruption.

Nothing was known of ski wax in those days. Whenever Thompson's skis became clogged with wet snow, he had to halt and wait for hours until the chill of the late afternoon had put an icy crust on the snow.

Through darkness and storms, he was never once known to have lost his way. He accounted for this by an intuitive sixth sense. He was frequently called upon to locate people who had become lost in the snow, or to rescue families whose cabins were snowbound.

Thompson's name became widely known up and down the Pacific coast. Soon other pairs of skis began to appear in the Sierra Nevada. The Old-Timers' "Snowshoe" races held each March on the Feather River, north of Sacramento, are an outgrowth of the ski races organized and carried on by the early miners and ranchers.

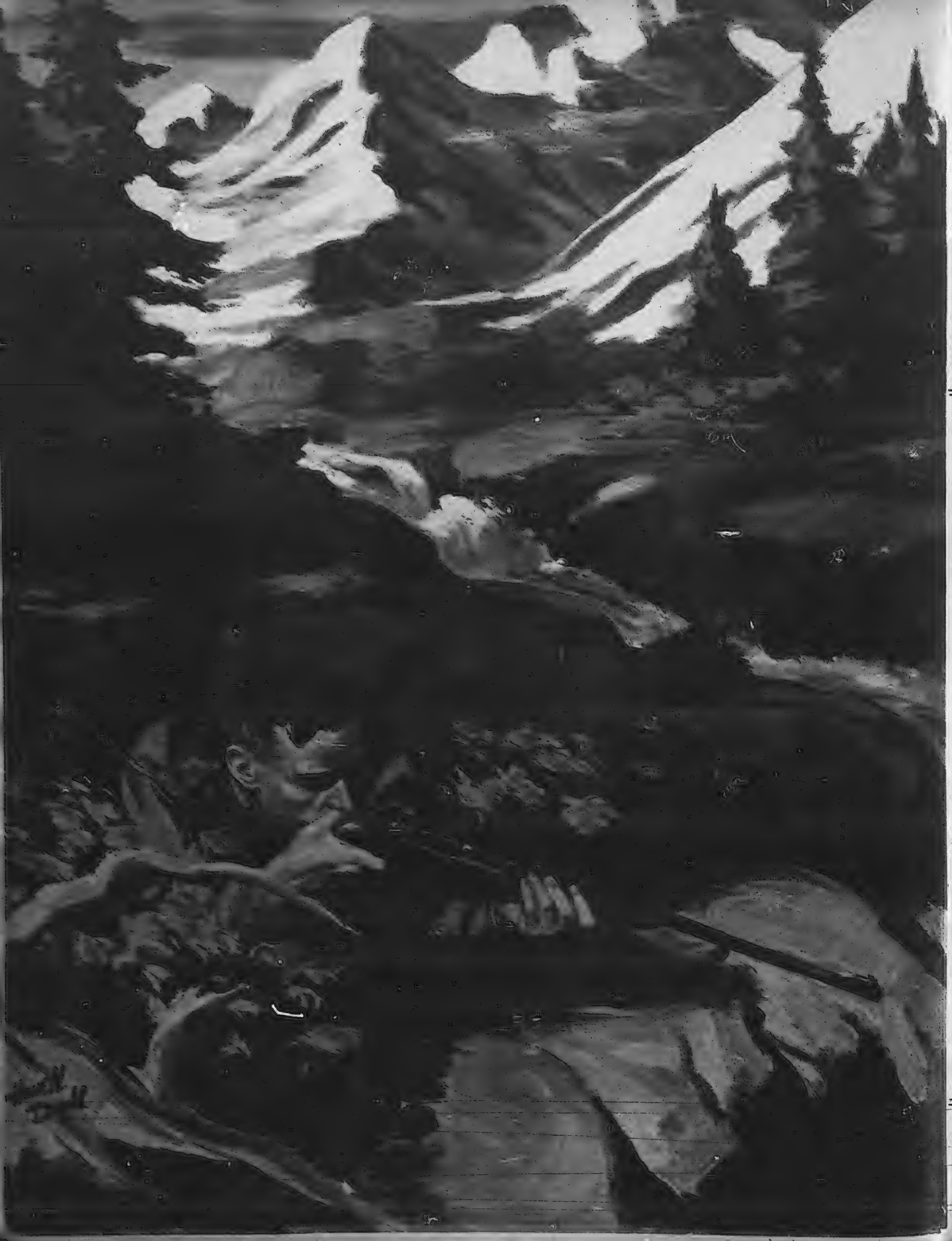
UP to his death, Thompson was considered the most expert all-round "snowshoer" in the West. In 1870, when he was forty-three, at Silver Mountain in Alpine County he ran 1,600 feet in 21 seconds. Roughly that's about fifty miles an hour—good going with skis that had only toe straps for bindings and no wax. He is also credited with a leap of 180 feet, no mean accomplishment on oaken twenty-five-pound skis.

For twenty years he carried the mails, and though civic officials on both sides of the mountain solemnly promised him that "something would be done" in the way of compensation, nothing ever was. As he approached his forty-seventh year he asked Congress for the modest sum of $6,000. The petition was signed by every state official in Carson City. In 1874 he went to Washington to present it in person. All he was able to collect were vague promises.

Although he had never been sick a day in his life, at the age of forty-nine he died suddenly on May 15, 1876, at Diamond Valley near Genoa, Nevada. There he was buried. On his tombstone is carved a crossed pair of skis.

"Snowshoe" Thompson pioneered the snow passes of the Sierra Nevada before the stagecoach, the railroad, and the airplane. The memory of America's first skier will be honored until the last skier makes his last sitzmark.

THE END



One Bullet

BY HAL G. EVARTS

In the wilds of Tibet, two hunters play a tense, fateful game of hide-and-seek, their quarry—each other

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWELL DODD

HE had stalked game so often and in so many different places that he was instinctively cautious. Propped on his elbows along the rimrock, Quade peered through his binoculars into the October twilight that shadowed the valley. A chill wind whistled off the snowcapped peaks at his back and a glacier-fed stream boomed over the boulders below, its meanders milk white against the dark green of the rhododendrons. Some two thousand yards away the bear browsed across a clearing.

She was big for her breed, around five hundred pounds, a burnt-chocolate color in her long winter coat, with heavily grizzled flanks and the unmistakable white shoulder band. Identifying your game, its markings and habits, was in Quade's opinion as necessary as the trigger squeeze.

He glanced up at the pale cloudless sky. Another half hour or so of light remained, but he might lose the bear in the dark, while by waiting until morning he would regain the advantage, provided the weather held.

His gaze swung back to the grizzly. She had halted by a patch of scrub, one forepaw lifted, snout upraised as though testing the air. Quade could see nothing suspicious, but suddenly she shambled off at an easy roving gait and disappeared into the brush. He stared hard at the clearing and said, "Damn!"

What could have alarmed her? Or was it alarm? She had seemed more curious than frightened. Puzzled, he stood up and then shook off his momentary concern. She would bed down for the night soon. The valley itself was narrow and densely wooded, pinched in at either end in a steep-walled bowl. The situation favored him.

Shouldering his Mauser, Quade picked his way back, a lean graying man, smooth-shaven and crisply immaculate with the infantryman's erect flexible carriage. Tomorrow was his last day. Already he had stretched his time margin thin; he must return. It was tomorrow or not at all, Quade told himself, because never was he likely to have this particular opportunity again.

His two *ullah* ponies huddled on the trail, rumps to the wind. He unsaddled his mount and unloaded the pack animal, turned them out to forage in an alpine meadow. In the lee of the ridge he spread his sleeping bag and bellowed a pile of yak dung into flame. Preoccupied with supper, it was some time before he noticed a rich rank smell that drifted up the trail from the direction of the valley. There reached him the fluted tinkle of a caravan bell.

Quade reloaded his gun. He looked out over the amphitheater of peaks and the river gorge, listening intently and damning the evening mist which had blanketed everything below him. The bleak brooding emptiness of this country held a hostile quality that wore at his nerves. The prospect of visitors tonight only heightened his uneasiness.

He had come to Sikang for one express purpose—to bag a Severtzow grizzly. He had wangled a leave from his Shanghai station, flown west to Chengtu, and packed in over the passes. During three weeks in the saddle he had jumped takin, goral, and other game, but only a single grizzly. For the past two days he'd trailed her patiently, maneuvering to close within range, and he did not intend to let anything interfere now.

With annoyance he watched several pannier-laden horses plod over the rise a few minutes later at dusk, led by two Tibetans on foot. It was a remote trail, isolated from the main caravan routes, and the size of the string surprised him. He waited beside his fire, expecting them to exchange civilities and pass on, but a European riding in the rear shouted the line to a halt and dismounted.

He walked forward into the circle of firelight, a swarthy compact little man, with a rifle slung across one shoulder and trailing the powerful reek which Quade had smelled earlier. He said, "I am en route to Tatsienlu, but we were delayed."

Quade hesitated. He was not in a hospitable mood, and, further, he guessed it was this outfit which had stirred up the grizzly. "You'll find water and better feed farther along," he said.

"Thank you, but we will remain here. My name is Gómez," the stranger volunteered. "João do Gómez of Macao." He pinched his nose and grimaced. "And if you have not already suspected—I am a hunter of musk."

"Musk?" Quade said. "That's it!" He had the trophy collector's aversion to men like Gómez, market shooters who hunted the year round, who had all but exterminated the male musk deer for their rutting glands, to fill the demands of Paris perfumeries. It was to him an effeminate and unclean business, and he said, "Made a big haul I see."

Gómez shrugged. "Fair, only fair. Game is scarce this year. During the war the Tibetans killed much."

HE called an order for his men to pitch camp. Quade turned away without comment. When he returned from hobbling his horses, the two Tibetans were hunkered over the coals, brewing their tea and *tsamba*, and Gómez sat cross-legged beside them, toasting his hands. "You are alone, colonel?" Gómez said.

"Alone," Quade told him. He had left his guide and wranglers at the last lamasery, thirty miles north, in order to travel lighter and faster. About to explain why, he checked himself. "Just a little vacation trip," he said.

Gómez arched his brows. "Is that not dangerous alone? One might meet with bandits, or have an accident."

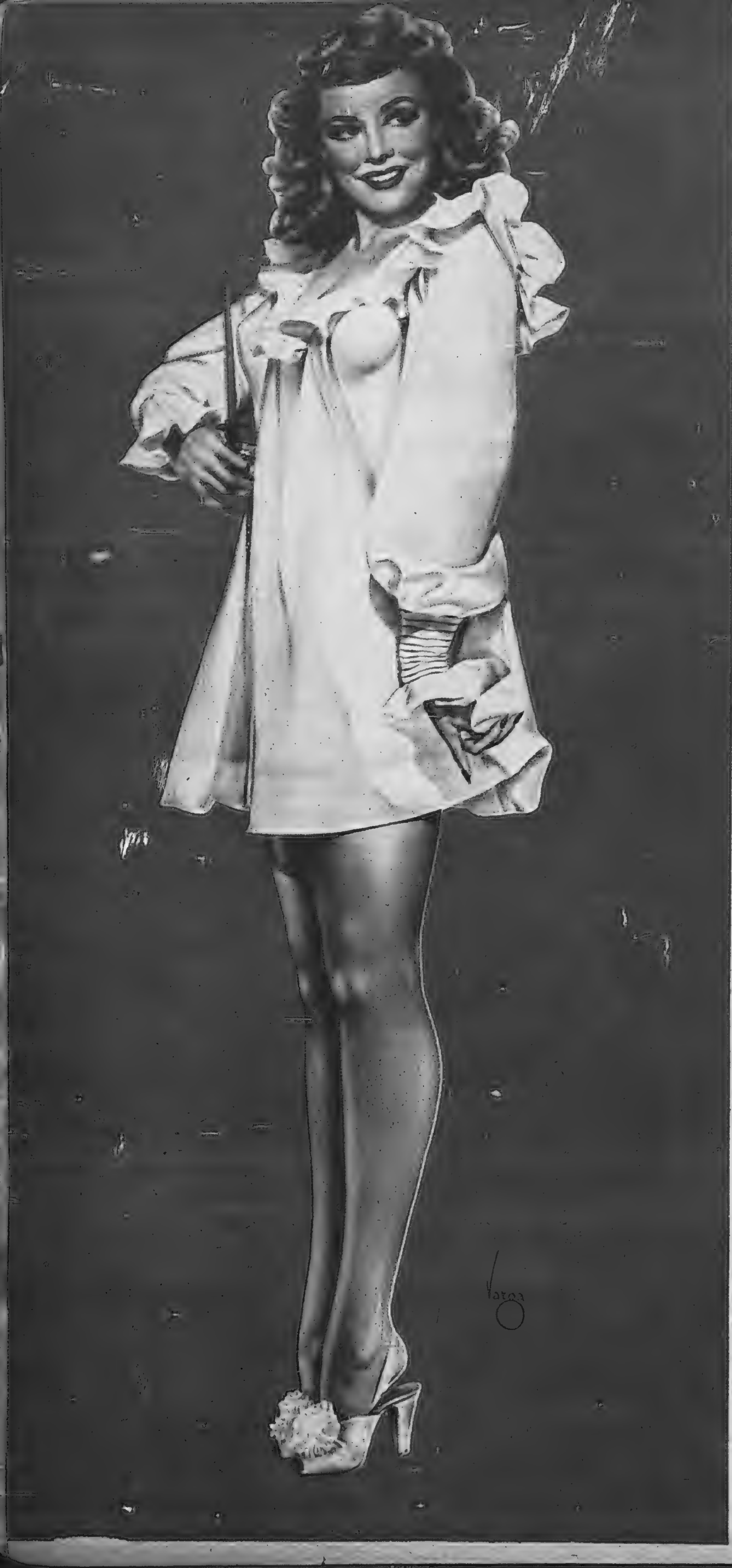
"That's why I carry this," Quade said. He squatted down and laid the Mauser across his knees. Deliberately he began to clean it, running over the metal parts with an oily patch until the barrel shone with a dull blue sheen. He clicked the bolt home, locked it.

"A beautiful weapon," Gómez said.

Quade grunted. The Tibetans, their meal done, observed him solemnly. Gómez leaned forward, his eyes bright with speculation. Quade's

(Continued on page 59)

He was taut with excitement. Automatically he checked his position, took a half breath and held it.



The Girl

WHEN Paulette Goddard was fourteen, Florenz Ziegfeld cast her as the girl in the cardboard moon in one of his Follies. She was to sit there—legs, midriff, and all—looking lovely.

"The trouble was," Paulette says today, "that they still keep thinking of me as The One & Original Midriff Girl."

By "they" she means the Hollywood producers who have fallen victims to the Goddard midriff. Most people, especially male ones, think of Miss Goddard as a cute little number in short dresses and long stockings, preferably black ones.

Scenario writers and directors were always trying to figure out new ways of showing Paulette's legs from a new angle. Nobody bothered to consider that the owner of those extremely well-shaped extremities might have some acting ability. It took patience and hard work to check this suggestive trend, but Goddard succeeded when she played the heroine in Kitty, a guttersnipe from the London slums who turns into a prime eighteenth-century Galatea. Suddenly everybody realized that Paulette Goddard was one of Hollywood's most versatile actresses.

The reaction was unexpected. Hollywood wanted to cast her as the noble woman who shows nothing but her great heart. In her new picture, Suddenly It's Spring, she was to play a somewhat ascetic WAC captain who comes home from the wars, and has to win back Fred MacMurray, her husband. Paulette took a look at the script and realized that the way things stood, she would get all the sympathy and Fred would get all the laughs.

Paulette took things into her own hands. "I'm going to play this for laughs, Mitch," she said to director Mitchell Leisen. "Why, the customers wouldn't believe me to be a noble woman!"

Paulette never got impressed by her own publicity. She wants to be a good actress, but she realizes that the customers want to see her legs once in a while. She was delighted when Varga decided to paint her in one of the short nightgowns she is wearing in the picture.

She has come a long way since her initial appearance in Ziegfeld's cardboard moon. She has played slapstick comedy opposite Bob Hope, danced with Fred Astaire, had a memorable

Even Varga couldn't improve on Goddard's slick figure in this handsome picture of Paulette.

in the Cardboard Moon

Most people in Hollywood have Paulette Goddard wrong. This will set them — and you — right

By JOSEPH WARREN

fight with Rosalind Russell as the cattiest specimen of the catty cast of The Women, and was one of the heroic Bataan nurses in So Proudly We Hail. She has survived slightly moronic stories, and has been starred in three consecutive De Mille pictures. How she got into a De Mille picture is one of the few true Hollywood success stories.

De Mille was preparing Northwest Mounted Police and was looking for a girl that could play a "tempestuous half-breed siren" opposite Gary Cooper. Taking a hint from the title of the picture, Miss Goddard decided to get her man. She made herself up as Louvette, the tempestuous half-breed, got hold of a script, studied a scene, and walked into De Mille's office, giving a tempestuous performance. She got the part.

Ever since the '30s, when newspaper editors went nuts over the puzzle, Is Goddard Married to Chaplin? Paulette has been one of the more controversial figures of Hollywood. She has been pronounced washed up, down and out, a few times and she has always come back, a better actress.

"It took me years to learn all the tricks and to realize that acting must be studied and practiced. Sometimes I feel sorry for the girls who believe that you can become a good actress by way of publicity and the columns. You won't find the Bergmans and Crawfords and Garsons in too many night clubs. Maybe they are too busy being good actresses. Or maybe it's not good for the complexion."

SOME people hate her and some like her, but all agree she is interesting. She is also mysterious, and has managed to keep an intriguing smoke screen around her life story. According to a Paramount Pictures press release, Paulette Goddard was born in Whitestone, Long Island, on June 3, 1915, which makes her something over thirty-one years old. When she was very young, her parents separated and she traveled around with her mother, getting her education in convenient, brief doses. Eventually they moved to Great Neck, Long Island, which then was a sort of Broadway summer camp. Paulette's chance came when Ziegfeld visited her uncle, Charles Goddard, president of the American Druggists' Syndicate. Next thing, Paulette sat in the cardboard moon.

Next Paulette emerges as the wife of Edward James, wealthy Asheville, North Carolina, lumberman. Evidently the transition from Broadway vamp to Asheville homemaker was too sudden, for Paulette almost died with boredom. A year later she went to Reno, got her divorce, and moved on to the Hollywood hills. She arrived with money, a $19,000 Duesenberg roadster, got herself a chic address, the Sunset Towers, and decided to get a screen test and a movie contract.

She got both, but then her luck ran out. Once she appeared briefly and anonymously in a Hal Roach comedy; her legs did, that is. Her legs were featured in the back of a car. The comedian came merrily along, saw her legs and made for them, when his buxom wife beat him over the head with her umbrella. At this point Miss Goddard began to get worried about her career. "You know how easily one gets typed in Hollywood," she says.

A fade-out followed, during which Paulette exchanged the Duesenberg for a Rolls-Royce roadster. Then she appeared as Charlie Chaplin's leading lady, offscreen and in Modern Times. The film was two years in the making and Paulette Goddard became the world's best-known invisible screen star. But when the picture was released, most people agreed that the advance publicity had not exaggerated. David O. Selznick signed her up, and after doing work in The Young in Heart and Dramatic School, she became a favorite for the great Scarlett O'Hara Sweepstakes, the most publicized "discovery hunt" in film history.

When everything was almost decided, Selznick met an unknown English actress named Vivien Leigh and signed her up for the part. Miss Goddard took her blow standing up, and came back, a feat which has endeared her to Hollywood. She proved that she was a real trouper all right.

She has just finished work in De Mille's new super epic, Unconquered, in which she manages to play a schoolteacher's daughter with a dash of gamin. She will go to England this spring to make a picture for Alexander Korda, possibly The Story of Carmen. She became a film producer in her own right last year when she produced and starred in Diary of a Chambermaid, made by Camden Corporation. Its stockholders are Paulette, her husband Burgess Meredith, the actor, whom she married in May, 1944, director Jean Renoir, and producer Benedict Bogeaus. The opus was hardly hailed as a masterpiece, and friends and critics suggested that Miss Goddard stick to playing shapely legged girls.

"Some day," she says, "we'll make another picture and then it will be the picture which I really wanted to make all my life long."

The Merediths live in a rented apartment overlooking the Sunset strip. When they are in the East, they stay in Meredith's house in Nyack, New York. No Hollywood palace with private tennis court and steam-heated swimming pool. Paulette has learned that life can be beautiful without them.

She is 110 pounds of concentrated vitality. When she comes into a room, even the furniture, rugs, and pictures seem to become alive. She loves paintings (French Impressionists), music, books, tennis, skiing, and she is a vivacious debater on the issues of the day. Best of all, she has got a grade-A sense of humor.

She went around the world before the war, and last year flew to Europe. In London, Korda chartered a plane for her. In a Paris hotel she wanted to take a bath, and was told that there was hot water only once a week; she had just missed the day.

A few minutes later the manager called her up. "Madame," he said, "we are going to heat the furnace for you. You will have your hot bath in an hour. France knows what it owes to your *figure.*"

"I realized that I was back in Ziegfeld's cardboard moon," Paulette says, "but I didn't mind."

THE END

Neglected—A Powerful Weapon Against TUBERCULOSIS!

BY ALBERT Q. MAISEL

How long will doctors ignore this 25-year-old serum which could have cut t.b. cases by more than half?

FOR fully twenty-five years American doctors have had a potent weapon against tuberculosis—not a cure but a preventive—which could have vastly reduced the ravages of the wasting White Plague.

The weapon is cheap and easy to use. Enough vaccine for the single inoculation that is required can be made for less than a dime. The weapon is safe; it causes no ill effects. The weapon is effective; that has now—at long last—been thoroughly proved by scrupulously controlled experiments on thousands of persons in this country and in Canada. Yet, despite low cost, safety, and effectiveness, this great defense against tuberculosis has been almost entirely neglected in the United States.

Since 1921, when the serum was first developed, t.b. deaths have never fallen below 50,000 a year in the United States. Last year, more than 125,000 new victims were stricken. Current data indicate that probably half, and possibly three fourths, of all these new cases could have been prevented if ultraconservatism and inertia had not tied our doctors' hands.

Physicians in the United States, with only a few significant exceptions, have avoided BCG on the ground that "no adequately controlled experiments have proved its worth and disproved its supposed dangers." Meanwhile, for an entire generation our t.b. authorities failed to sponsor the large-scale controlled experiments which alone could have justified or disproved the claims of the vaccine's proponents.

Now, at last, thanks to the U. S. Public Health Service, the great Phipps Institute in Philadelphia, and a tiny band of persistent scientists, a most carefully planned and scrupulously scientific mass experiment has been completed.

The story of BCG starts way back in the year 1908, when two French scientists, Albert Calmette and Camille Guérin, working at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, discovered that they could give some degree of t.b. immunity to cattle by inoculating them with a single tiny dose of virulent tubercle bacilli. For the next thirteen years Calmette and Guérin worked on the problem of making their inoculation safe enough for human use. To do this they had to reduce the virulence of the germ without destroying its ability to stimulate the body into developing immunity.

After scores of false starts they finally hit upon the trick. They took a highly virulent bovine strain of t.b. (from infected cattle) and bred it in the laboratory. Every fifteen days or so they transplanted their culture to fresh breeding medium. After more than 200 transplantations—over a period of thirteen years—they developed a strain of tubercle bacillus that no longer produced progressive tuberculosis in the usual laboratory animals. But this *mutant* strain still retained its power to stimulate the development of immunizing antibodies. They called it BCG, or the Bacillus of Calmette and Guérin.

In Europe the new inoculation was greeted with loud—if uncritical—huzzas. In France, in Denmark, in Sweden, and elsewhere millions of infants—new born to tuberculosis mothers—were inoculated in the first ten days of life.

In Norway this long-term experience with BCG proved its value when the Nazi invasion came. The Norwegian Public Health Service, which had been using BCG since 1927, started an intensive inoculation campaign to head off the expected rise of tuberculosis which occupation and privation would cause. In Oslo alone, more than 13,000 were vaccinated; several times as many vaccinations were given throughout the country. Once the Germans left, Dr. C. Hertzberg of the Oslo Municipal Health Service was able to evaluate the astounding effectiveness of the vaccine. T.b. deaths among the vaccinated totaled only 18 per cent as high as among the unprotected. T.b. infections among the BCG-treated ran only 10 per cent as high as among the unvaccinated.

In Denmark, the February, 1946, conference of the State Serum Institute and the Danish National Association Against Tuberculosis, reviewing the war work with BCG, reported that large numbers of school children between the ages of ten and fourteen had been inoculated, and that, on the basis of BCG's merit, a program for complete inoculation of this group would be carried through by 1948.

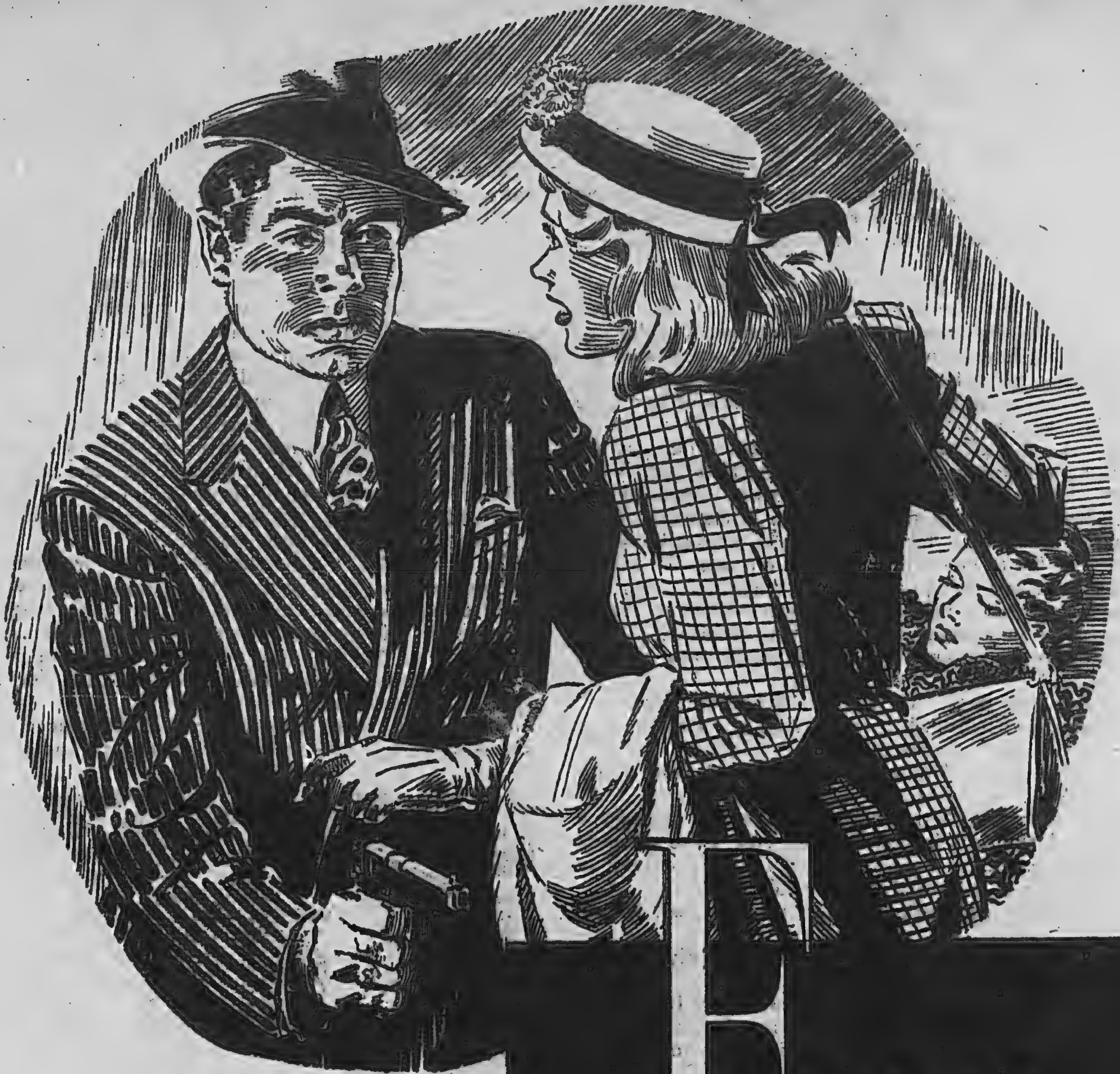
Even in Japan, BCG vaccination has made great progress. When U.S. Army medical men reached Tokyo, they found that the Japanese had vaccinated 1,955,000 persons in 1942; in 1943 the number totaled 5,558,000.

In Russia, BCG has been widely used, with upward of 2,000,000 people vaccinated. In some areas—where t.b. runs high—all new-born babies receive the injection as a standard routine. The Russians have been experimenting, too, on methods of freezing and drying the vaccine so that it may be preserved for long periods and safely shipped from a central laboratory.

Even in England, BCG has now won wide approval and the Ministry of Health has finally decided—after much urging by t.b. specialists—to set up a laboratory for the production of vaccine.

BCG might have been speedily accepted in this country, too, had not an unfortunate accident occurred in Lübeck, Germany. There,

(*Continued on page 52*)



FEAR NO MORE

BY LESLIE EDGLEY

SHARON CARLIN, on a mysterious errand for her wealthy employer, walked into a murder trap. It caught Jay Rogers, too. Bataan-trained, Jay could fight for their lives better than he could face the threat to their love when Sharon's frightening secret came to light.

ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREW MICHAEL

A LIBERTY BOOK CONDENSATION · *READING TIME: ONE EVENING*

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As Sharon Carlin turned away from the taxi towards the sparsely thronged platform of the Glendale depot, her over-shoulder purse felt heavy with the extra weight of the heavily sealed manila envelope inside it. Her overnight case thumped gently against the slim line of her thigh under her tweed suit. It was a black-and-white houndstooth check; a black top coat was folded neatly over her left arm. She felt quite proud and happy about her ensemble, and especially pleased about the black felt sailor.

Excitement hummed through her, a subconscious feeling of release after two weeks of near-confinement. Only now, waiting for the train to San Francisco, did she see how closely she had been tied down ever since she had taken the job. Milo Seymour and his research in the realm of ancient ceramics had taken up more of her time than she had realized.

She moved on, past the station entrance. Then, in the next instant, a hand was on her arm, halting her.

"Sherry . . ." Her overnight case went down to the platform. Keith Burgess grinned at her. "Surprised?"

He was drunk again. Drunk, as usual, she automatically amended. To the casual onlooker he might even have appeared sober, but from past experience she knew. His tweed jacket hung on his slight, stoop-shouldered frame with a carelessness worthy of a dapper scarecrow.

"Where have you been, Keith? I haven't seen you for over a month!"

"Been away, fair lady. Ah, yes. Been incommunicado." His voice rose and fell with lyric intensity. "I have been absent from thee in the spring."

"Autumn," she said. "Where 've you been? How'd you find me here?"

"Amazingly simple, dear heart. I took a cab out to see you. Reached the hotel, and behold you were already getting into a cab of your own—so I told my driver to follow you. Like in a detective story, Sherry."

"Was there any particular reason you wanted to see me, Keith?"

His vague, sensitive face sobered momentarily. "Only to look at you."

His words sent a twinge of pity through her. It was the only emotion she could ever know for him. He was in love with her, but it was a passive adoration, too unaspiring and submissive to arouse reciprocity.

"Where can I reach you when I get back Monday?"

"That, rumor has it, I wouldn't know. My hostel has seen fit to lock me out. Can't understand it, can't understand it at all. . . . Something to tell you, Sherry. Something awf'ly important. . . . 'Sgone from me. Flown like a bird of passage."

Down the track came the San Francisco train.

"What have you been doing this past month, Keith?"

"Can't remember, dear heart. Something must tell you, too; important I tell you."

"Where'd you get those bruises on your forehead?"

"Someone tried to kill me."

"Are you serious or not, Keith?"

"Tried to kill me," he mumbled again.

The long line of coaches stopped before them. The passengers moved towards the train. Fumbling in her purse, Sharon felt the sealed manila envelope, lipstick, change purse, the sharp edge of her nail file. At last she found what she sought.

"Here," she said. "Here's the key to my apartment. You stay there over the week-end. I'm not coming back until Monday morning."

His hands shook slightly as he took it from her. "You are angelic, fair lady."

She glanced anxiously toward the train. Only a few passengers remained on the platform for last minute good-bys.

A conductor looked impatiently at his watch.

"Try to stay in, Keith. You'll find coffee and canned goods in the pantry. Don't go out—"

"Something to tell you," he mumbled. "Awf'ly important."

The locomotive whistle sounded a muted warning.

"I've got to run now, Keith!" She stooped for her overnight case and then stood still, looking at him. "Oh, I forgot. You'll need some money."

"But I've an abundance of lucre—" His hand reached into his pocket and brought out a thick roll of currency. "You can see with your own unbiased eyes—"

Someone shouted at her. Then she was in the vestibule of the moving train, trying to catch her breath.

She moved along the corridor. For the moment there was no porter to help her. He had gone ahead of her, encumbered with luggage. Having only her small overnight case to carry, she followed.

She came to the closed door of her compartment, *12-B*, and turned the handle of the door. To her surprise a man sat on the seat near the door, facing her, and in the corner beside the window was a woman, her body slumped in the position of one who sleeps sitting up, her face hidden in the shadow of the half-drawn shade.

Sharon halted. "Oh, I'm sorry—"

"It's all right." The man's voice was soft, toneless. "Come in." The moment he rose she saw the revolver glinting in his hand. "Just be sensible and come inside."

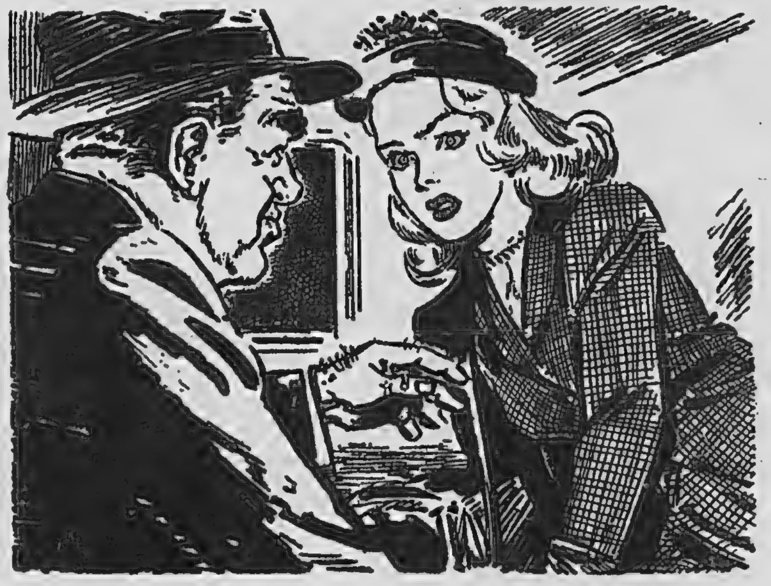
Before she could react, he leaned forward and pulled her inside. His heel quickly pushed the door shut.

"I wouldn't try yelling," he said.

She bit her lip, but not because of his warning. Not so long ago—never long enough ago, no matter how long she might live—she had screamed, and remembering why she had done it, she always vowed never to scream again.

He pushed her into the place he had been occupying. Then his hand went behind him, locking the door. "Make yourself comfortable."

She looked up at him—a short, pudgy-faced man in a double-breasted pin-stripe dark suit. He had a red, sensual, almost womanish mouth and slate-colored, heavy-lidded eyes. His hair was coarse and black, combed straight back from his sallow forehead, receding at his slanting temples on either side of a thin widow's peak.



The turning wheels clicked with increasing celerity.

"I don't know what this means," she said in a dry whisper, "but obviously it's all a mistake. I've never met you before, and I'm sure you don't know me. What are you and that woman doing in my compartment?"

"Shut up," he said. "You talk too much." His toneless voice and economy of movement exuded the evil menace of a crouching beast of prey. He stood at ease, balanced lightly on his spread feet, riding the erratic movement of the swaying car.

Sharon sank into a seat. "I'm sure this is all a mistake," she repeated. "You've mistaken me for someone else. My name's Sharon Carlin. In my purse—"

"Don't move your hands."

"But I only wanted to prove my identity."

His jaws began to champ slowly on a wad of gum. He watched her with bleak, expressionless eyes.

"Please listen to me!" she said desperately. "I'm a secretary. I've been working in Hollywood for Mr. and Mrs. Milo Seymour for the last two weeks. They live on Hastings Drive—that's just off Los Feliz Boulevard. I'm going to San Francisco over the week-end on a special errand for Mr. Seymour." She paused, tense and alert, remembering the sealed envelope in her purse. Its contents were an unknown quantity, but it undoubtedly was valuable if Mr. Seymour wanted her to deliver it personally. She went on, "I'm to see a Mr. Jay Rogers in the Consolidated Building, San Francisco. Then I'm to stay at a —a certain hotel on Saturday night and catch a train back late Sunday night."

"What makes you think I'm interested in all this?"

"Because you've got to see you've made a mistake!"

"I don't make mistakes."

She said, "I could call for help."

"Like to try it?" The revolver moved in his hand. "The porter may be along shortly. When he comes—"

The rap at the door coincided with his warning. "Is there anything you wish?" the porter's voice said in the corridor. As he tried the door, the gun moved closer towards her.

She forced words from her taut throat. "Thank you, porter. Everything's satisfactory."

"Yes, ma'am. If you need me, just ring."

A moment later they heard his circumspect rap at another door down the corridor.

"You were very sensible," said the man. "You did the right thing." Still guarding her with the revolver, he raised the shade and then let down the folding metal wash basin." He reached into his coat pocket with his free hand.

"Get yourself a paper cup."

"Why?"

"Get it."

As she moved slowly towards the wash bowl, her own face approached her in the mirror. The oval blue eyes under the long, graceful brows had fear in them. A familiar, unwelcome look. She reached for a paper cup with trembling hands, looking at the delicate nose and narrow forehead under the rolled chestnut hair, the cleft chin under the sensitive mouth, as if seeking to memorize her features against the inevitable foreclosure of oblivion.

He held an uncorked pint of bourbon in his hand when she turned to face him.

"Hold the cup out." He poured a generous finger of liquor into the container. "Okay, drink it."

"But you can't mean—"

The revolver moved. "I'll count three."

She started to sip, and then, shuddering, gulped. Her throat rebelled in violent constriction. A sudden paroxysm of choking brought blinding tears to her eyes.

"All of it," he ordered coldly—"and keep it down."

She swallowed the remainder against her stomach's churning protest.

"Put the cup in the basin."

She obeyed his order and then slowly turned, facing the woman in the corner.

"Who is she?" she demanded. "How can she sleep through all this?"

Outside the passing landscape was growing dark. The dimness in the compartment was transforming its occupants into unsubstantial shadows.

"Pull down the shade," the man said.

As she obeyed, he switched on the corner light. Instantly the woman's shadowed face came into gray relief. The eyes were closed under unplucked brows, but the thin nose and rabbity mouth were clearly drawn under thick brown hair streaked with gray. She was in her late forties, hatless, in a Persian lamb coat fastened high at the throat.

"Quiet, isn't she?" the man said softly.

Slow, mounting fear began to seep through her. She said, "You can't mean—" and then, in a whisper, "She—she's dead. . . ."

"That's right," he agreed, leaning towards her. "Too bad you killed her, isn't it?"

His words brought her head up in a look of shocked incredulity. But she had no opportunity to cry out or evade his downswinging arm. The revolver butt crashed against the side of her head.

A MAN'S voice said, from a great distance, "Okay, now. Okay." It was not the voice she remembered before plunging into unconsciousness.

Wedge-like pain thrust its way through her head. Her nostrils contracted against the pungent sting of smelling salts.

She whispered, "Please don't. I'm all right now. Please wait a moment."

She was still on the train. She could hear the wheels clicking.

"All right," the voice growled. "You can quit stalling now."

Slowly she opened her eyes. The man was leaning over her. Then his face went away as he straightened—a tall, thick-chested man in a dark suit, with a dour mouth under a lumpy nose. His skin was coarse-textured and muddy. His eyes were shrewd and gray under tufted brows like strips of steel wool. His hair had the same coarseness, prematurely gray above his sloping forehead.

Turning her head was an agonizing effort, but she had to do it. Both the woman and the other man were gone. She was alone with the tall stranger.

"Who are you?" she asked weakly.

"I guess I'll ask the questions." His voice was low and harsh. His big hand went into his pocket, then was thrust forward under her face. His open palm held an impressive nickel-plated badge. "I'm a police detective. You're in an ugly jam, Miss Carlin."

"How do you know my name?"

"Your purse."

Her hands went inside the bag. She relaxed. The sealed envelope was there, still intact. Her head ached intolerably. She touched the swollen area below her hat.

"You know what I mean, don't you? You've killed someone. I'll have to warn you not to say anything—"

"But I haven't killed anyone!"

"There happen to be witnesses—plus a dead body. The body's been removed to the baggage car. It'll be taken off the train at the next stop. We're getting off there, too."

"Who are you? Who called you in?"

"Your door was ajar, and the porter looked in. He knows me—I make frequent trips to and from Los Angeles—so he called me right away. The other passengers don't know what's happened."

"But the other man—what happened to him? He hit me with his gun!"

"You were drunk and fell, as you passed out."

"He made me drink! He forced me to!"

"Miss Carlin, getting hysterical won't help you."

She swallowed against a sudden tightness in her throat. "Who was the woman you say I—I killed?"

"You ought to know that."

"But I don't."

"Well, we don't either. She didn't have any identification on her. That's why we're getting off at the next stop. It happens to be my own bailiwick. We'll make inquiries and hold you for questioning."

"How did I—" She stopped. "How was she killed?"

"A nail file—right through the throat. Your nail file, Miss Carlin. It has your initials on it."

SHE cried out, and then sank back helplessly. So much could never have happened in so short a time. Her eyes turned to her watch. It was ten forty-five. She had been traveling almost four hours, and she had been unconscious most of that time.

"Better pull yourself together, Miss Carlin," the grating voice said harshly. "We'll be stopping in a few minutes at Whitford."

"Whitford!"

The echoed word seemed wrenched from her, as if she had screamed it. Yet it was only a whisper.

"Sure, Whitford," he said. "What about it?"

Despair silenced her. She fought against a sudden, fearful trembling. Whitford was inextricably bound up with her resolve never to scream again. Whitford was the past revived, confirming the incredible present with the horrifying fact that the impossible could happen.

"If you'll promise you won't make any trouble, I won't use any handcuffs," the man said.

She nodded dumbly, ready to agree to anything.

He lifted the shade at the window. The train was slowing down. He turned back to her.

"My bag," she said. "My overnight case. . . ."

"It's with the body. They'll be taken off the train together. You better put on your coat."

When she stood up from the seat, she swayed. Her hand went out to steady herself. He waited until she was ready and then opened the door. He stood back, thrusting his right hand in his pocket, bulging his coat with more than the thickness of his fist.

"You go first," he said—"and no tricks."

As she walked ahead of him down the corridor, her head ached unbearably. Memory beat against her brain in gray waves. She had been in Whitford before. . . .

"This way," he said, taking her arm.

She looked back towards her Pullman in despair, and then her heart lurched with shock. There was a face at one of the lighted windows, watching her. It disappeared the moment she caught sight of it, but she couldn't mistake the features. It was the man with the gun.

"There he is!" she cried. "He's there!"

"You said you'd be sensible," the tall man muttered. "Hurry up now."

"But I saw him! The man who did it!"

The train was already moving. She tore her arm free. She simply wouldn't be arrested for a crime she hadn't committed. She ran headlong towards the moving train. It would be gone before she reached it; she must cross the rails in its wake and attempt to get away.

As she flung herself across the tracks, paralyzing white light impaled her in a widening beam, and a deafening roar bore down on her. A hissing suction pulled at her. But she forced herself onward, dazedly aware she had barely missed being run down by a streamliner streaking through the city on the parallel track. She stumbled on, gasping, while the lighted coaches thundered past her. Dust and grit swirled chokingly around her. Then she was around a corner, tripping against a curb.

A TAXI loomed up and a chinless, unshaven face looked at her inquiringly from behind the wheel. At her signal the back door swung open. She sank back on the torn leather seat.

"Quick," she said. "Get me away from here."

They skidded around a corner. At the end of a block she looked back through the rear window. No one was following them.

"Is there any kind of restaurant or bus stop on the highway where I can make a 'phone call?"

"There's the Casa Blanca. It's an all-night joint."

"Oh, yes . . . take me there."

Private cars and transport trucks were parked around the circular building. It was eleven-twenty by the illuminated clock at the top of the tower.

Sharon added two dollars to her fare. "If anyone should ask for me . . ."

He grinned toothlessly. "I get ya, lady."

Inside the restaurant there was a row of telephone booths behind the cashier's desk. She hurried into one and closed the folding door and dialed the operator.

"Long distance, please."

Six minutes later she stepped dispiritedly from the booth. The busy signal still whined in her ears. She sat down at the counter, beside a middle-aged man with a comfortable, middle-aged neckline.

"What's yours, miss?"

She looked at the waitress, not seeing her. "Coffee, please." Her head was aching again. She dreaded the prospect of returning to the telephone.

The plump man beside her placed a quarter tip on the counter. "Well, g'night, Josie."

"G'night, Mr. Osborn. Have a nice trip."

"Too bad you can't come along," he chuckled. "We could turn Frisco upside down, Josie. I'd sure like some company tonight."

Sharon swiveled around on her stool. "I'd like to go with you. If you really have room for a passenger—" She gestured helplessly, embarrassed by his silent inspection. "I was going to try to get a bus to San Francisco, but it's such an awkward time of night—"

The soft-necked man finished his appraisal. "Okay, sister. Finish your coffee, and we'll leave."

It was raining when they reached San Francisco.

Sharon looked at her watch, and then, finding it stopped, peered through the windshield until she saw a round-faced clock suspended outside a jeweler's window. She wound her watch. Eleven-fifteen.

"I'll drop you off at the next corner," said Mr. Osborn. "I'd take you around to the Consolidated Building, but I'm already late for my appointment."

"Please don't bother. I know I can find it without any trouble."

"Too bad we had to have that flat tire in Fresno."

"Yes, I know." She put out her hand. "Thank you so much. You've been awfully kind."

"Don't mention it," he said. "You helped me drive, didn't you? Why else d'ye think I wanted you along?"

He was still chuckling when she opened the door at the corner. She stepped quickly down to the wet pavement and waved to him as the traffic signal changed. Then she stood back under a sidewalk canopy. She had to wait ten minutes for a cab.

In the Consolidated Building on Kearny Street she walked slowly down a corridor to the door marked *Jay Rogers, Skip Tracer.* Whatever that meant, she thought. Then she opened the door.

The girl at the desk in the sparsely furnished reception room looked up from painting her nails. She was a ripe brunette. It was plain she resented being interrupted.

Sharon gazed past her at the closed door behind her desk. "Mr. Rogers?"

"He's busy now. Wha'd'ya want?"

"I—I have a package for him."

"Oh, that," the girl said carelessly. "He's been waiting for it."

Sharon took the manila envelope from her purse. "I'm supposed to get another package in exchange."

"Yeah, I know." The girl nodded at a cardboard parcel on the corner of the desk. "That's it, honey. You take it. I gotta let my nails dry."

Sharon placed the envelope on the desk and picked up the parcel. It was only slightly heavier than the envelope.

The receptionist looked disinterestedly at the envelope. "Looks kinda small."

"It's all I was told to bring."

"Well, could be. I'll give it to him when he's through."

On the street Sharon caught a cab without difficulty. The rain had stopped, and she drove to the hotel under a shining blue sky.

Walking through the expensive lobby, she felt bedraggled, badly in need of a shower and a shampoo. "I have a reservation," she said, and gave her name to the clerk at the desk.

He riffled through a file of cards, then said, "I'm very sorry, but we have no record of any reservation being made for you, Miss Carlin."

"But there must be," she said in dismay. "My employer confirmed it before I left Los Angeles."

"I assure you no reservation has been made for you," he said coldly, with a finality worthy of a Supreme Court decision. "We have no available space whatsoever."

Her anger burned thinly inside her as she returned slowly to the street. She had a score to settle with Mr. Jay Rogers, and she would do it at once.

LOOKING at the newcomer in his office, remotely aware that she was addressing him, Jay hoped he made a better picture than she presented to him. A clearer picture, anyway. He could see two of her, and both versions were wavering and hazy. Her voice scraped faintly at his hearing. He set his teeth and shook his head. Forked pain sky-rocketed inside his skull, but the out-of-focus effect disappeared.

"Are you Mr. Rogers, or aren't you?"

He yawned, involuntarily. "That's right."

"Well, I'm Sharon Carlin."

He made no answer, sitting relaxed in the swivel chair behind the scarred mahogany desk. He was small-boned and slim-framed, under six feet, past his middle twenties. His crisp fair hair was brushed back from a sensible forehead. He had thin, spaced brows above small blue eyes, narrowed in the habitual squint of professional flyers. His nose slanted slightly to the left, and he had a rather small, quizzical mouth.

She said, holding back obvious anger, "I want to know why you didn't make that hotel reservation for me! Now I've nowhere at all to go, and I haven't slept all night—"

He leaned forward in his squeaking chair. "Now, wait—one thing at a time—"

"I'm Sharon Carlin," she said wrathfully. "Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

He sat back. "Not a thing."

"But you're Jay Rogers, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Then you *must* know about me! You told Mr. Seymour—"

He shook his head. "Never heard of him."

For a moment he thought she would faint. He rose quickly and stepped around the battered desk and put his arms around her. He led her gently to the cushioned settee beside the window.

"I—I don't understand," she whispered. "I delivered the envelope here—and your secretary had your package waiting for me—"

For the first time he noticed the cardboard parcel still tucked under her arm.

"What are you doing with my laundry?"

"Laundry?" she echoed weakly.

"Sure. A couple of dirty shirts and shorts and four pairs of socks. I told Dorrie to give them to the girl who brought the package of clean things."

"But surely your secretary would know there wouldn't be laundry in an envelope—even one that size—"

"Dorrie isn't too bright. I told her to give the package to a girl who would come in with another package. That's how it all happened."

"Then you didn't expect the envelope?"

"What envelope?"

"The one Mr. Seymour sent to you!"

"I don't know any Mr. Seymour."

"But it was addressed to you," she said desperately.

He shrugged. "I didn't expect it, and I haven't seen it."

She looked at him quickly. "Didn't your secretary give it to you?"

"I was on the phone when Dorrie left for the day. I'd been on it for half an hour." He said, "My—uh—sister—" and then went on, "Dorrie had a heavy date and was in a rush to get away. She put something on my desk, but I was too involved with my call to pay any attention to her. About three minutes after she'd gone, I hung up and then sat back in this chair. I had my back to the door. The next thing I knew someone came up behind me and rapped me over the head."

"Oh, no!"

"Oh, yes," he said, exploring the back of his head with tender fingers. "When I came to, you were standing in front of my desk, watching me. I want to know why you came here and what was in that envelope and why somebody rapped me and snatched it away from me."

"I can tell you why I thought I came here. But I don't know what the contents of that envelope were—or why anybody should attack you. . . ." Her voice faltered. "I'm afraid I—I can't tell you much at all."

He looked at her. "Tired, aren't you?"

She sighed. "A little."

"Let's get some lunch inside us. We'll talk while we eat."

IN the restaurant he said casually, "Maybe I'd better tell you about me first. I run down missing husbands and wives and individuals who owe bills—mostly the latter. I'm licensed as a private detective, but I don't go around solving murder mysteries. I've just been in business for the last six months. For five years before that I was in the Philippines. I was there before and after Bataan fell. I was one of the guerillas you may have read about. I'm the one who didn't write a book."

The waiter appeared with their drinks.

"To better understanding between the great coast cities and their citizenry," Jay Rogers said. "Especially the two of us."

She sipped the drink slowly, almost cautiously, then set her glass down. "I've been working for Mr. and Mrs. Milo Seymour in Hollywood for the last two weeks—"

"How'd you get the job?"

"I saw an ad in the *Times*. It was a secretarial job calling for shorthand and typing. The address was on Hastings Drive."

"What did you do for Seymour? What's his business?"

"Well, he doesn't have a business. He's writing a book—about ancient ceramics. He doesn't have to work. The Seymours are quite wealthy. I think it's Mrs. Seymour's money, actually. They've been married five years." She picked up her drink again. Her hand was steady. "I stayed at the house for the most part, except for the few days I did research at the public library."

"How wealthy are the Seymours?"

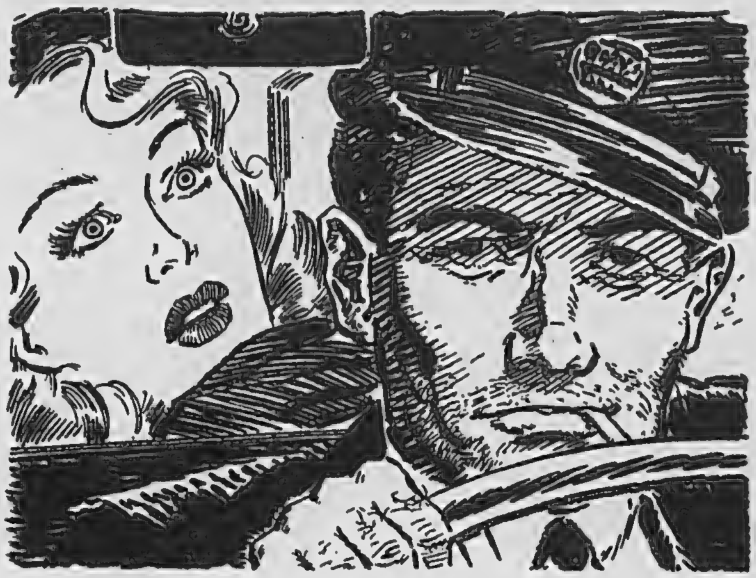
"Oh, millionaires, I think. At least Mrs. Seymour inherited a lot of money before her first marriage, and when her first husband died, she came into more. . . ."

"Stocks and bonds? Insurance?"

"No, not insurance. She has some sort of bias against it. She doesn't even have her own life insured."

"How'd you find out about all this?"

"The housekeeper likes to talk. She and her husband run the house. Their name's Godfrey, and there's a chauffeur named Cresca."



"Why'd you come on this trip?"

"Well, Mr. Seymour asked me to. That was yesterday afternoon. I'd been doing research for him at the public library all day, and I barely had time to get back to my hotel and bathe and change and then catch my train. My train tickets were all ready and thirty dollars for incidental expenses and my hotel reservations. We agreed I'd stay overnight—"

He interrupted. "Did Seymour actually say I'd reserved a room for you?"

"It was his wife who called me about it. She had me paged at the restaurant where I had lunch—I'd told Mr. Seymour where I'd be if he wanted me—and asked if I'd go to San Francisco for him."

"Where was Seymour?"

"He'd been called out. He was picking up train reservations, and she said he'd use them if I couldn't go. I said I'd be glad to do it, naturally. She said 'Reservations have been made for you,' and I assumed you had made them."

"She didn't tell you what was in the envelope?"

"No."

"Where did you pick it up?"

"It was waiting for me at the desk when I reached my hotel. There was another envelope with it. My train tickets and expense money were in that."

There was a pause while the waiter placed their luncheon.

"Okay," Jay said when they were alone again. "Then what?"

"Well, I—I came to San Francisco on the train and came to your office. . . ."

"What time was that?"

"A little before twelve. Then I went directly to the hotel."

"Was your train late, Miss Carlin?"

"Why—why, no. I—I don't think so."

"Then why did it take you so long to reach my place?"

Her blood beat in her cheeks in slow, telltale waves. She put her fork down. "This is what happened," she began slowly.

When she had finished he said, "Quite a yarn."

"You don't believe me, do you?"

"I'm trying to figure it out." He looked idly around the room, then back at her, casually. "Don't get excited, but there's somebody watching us. You'll be able to see him if you get out your compact. He's over your left shoulder at a forty degree angle."

He waited while she took a square plastic compact from her purse and simulated interest in her hair.

"Well?"

"Yes," she said, trembling. "It's the one who hit me with the revolver." She returned the compact to her purse. "What shall we do?"

"We might call the police—"

"Oh, no!"

"Why not?"

"My nail file . . ."

"All right," he said. "I'll string along with you. What was the name of the town where you were taken off the train?"

"I don't know," she said quickly. "I was in a daze. The whiskey and the blow on the head—everything else."

"Why didn't you ask the cab driver where you were?"

"I simply didn't think of it. I only wanted to get away as fast as I could." Her hand went nervously to her mouth. "Is he still watching me?"

"He's still there," he said. "About that envelope—I'd say the thing to do is get on the 'phone again and tell Mr. Seymour the whole story." He rubbed his nose and yawned. "Well, here's where we lose your friend. Make your way very casually to the powder room. Stay in there exactly five minutes and then come out, and just slip out of the side door to your left and take a cab to the St. Francis Hotel. I'll join you there in the lobby under the Austrian clock in fifteen minutes or less."

He waited until the studded leather door in the back wall had sighed shut behind her. Then he paid for their luncheon and glanced carelessly at his watch. He stood up slowly and made his way towards the door.

Suddenly, as he drew abreast of the man's table, he tripped and plunged forward. His flailing arm swept the crockery and cutlery to the floor amidst a splintering of glass. Coffee and water splashed as the seated man tried in vain to squirm to safety, held prisoner by the chair wedged tightly against the wall.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, old man! So sorry!"

Waiters and busboys gathered. The maitre d'hotel had assumed full command of the situation. Apologies were freely offered and grudgingly accepted.

A little while later Jay Rogers walked briskly into the spacious lobby of the St. Francis. Sharon's face lighted as he approached her.

"Did you think I wouldn't come?"

"I didn't know what to think. There was so much commotion when I left."

He grinned. "Well, I paid for the cleaning bill. . . ." Then he said gravely, "I think you'd better call Hollywood right away. We'll do it from the Mark Hopkins, though. Our friend might pick up my cabbie. If we don't get Seymour, we'll get on our way to him."

She hesitated. "But I don't know about trains—and I haven't anywhere to stay—"

"We won't take the train," he said. "We won't waste any time. If we need to, we'll fly back."

OUTSIDE the Glendale airport he hailed a cab and gave the address of her apartment hotel.

"It's too late to call on the Seymours now," he said. "Besides, you need some sleep."

"I wish I'd been able to reach them this afternoon."

"Not your fault. You couldn't help it if the line was busy a half dozen times."

"Five times," she said. "The last time there was no answer at all."

When their cab pulled up outside her apartment hotel he said, "I'd better come up with you. . . ."

"Oh, no," she said. "I'm all right now."

"Are you sure?"

"Really, Jay!" It was the first time she had used his name. "I'll go straight to sleep."

"Well, then . . ." The meter ticked in front of them. "I'll see you in the morning. Around nine?"

"What will you do in the meantime?"

"I'll find a hotel—or maybe I'll give someone a ring. I've a few friends in this part of the woods." He put out his hand. "Good night, Sharon. Good luck."

"Thank you," she said. "Good night, Jay."

Yawning, mentally numbed by the swift inundation of her fatigue, she came to the door of her apartment and automatically put out her hand to open it before thinking to look in her purse for her key. The handle turned freely. She reached for the light switch.

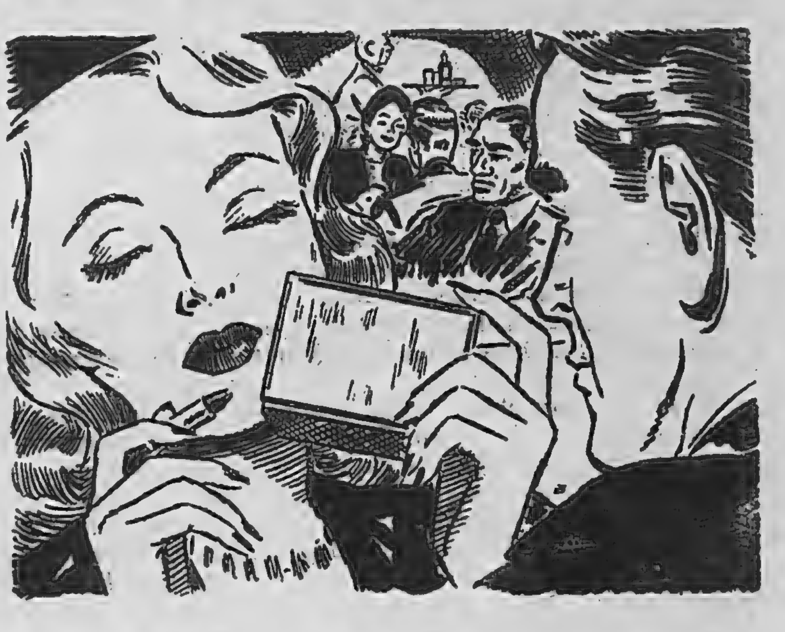
The man sprawled out in the easy chair grimaced at the sudden glare of light. After the first shock, she smiled, relaxing, and closed the door behind her.

"Oh, Keith, I'd forgotten all about you!"

He struggled upward from befogged drowsiness. "Oh, Sherry—you been away long?"

"No, Keith. It's only Saturday night. Sunday morning, really," she said, slipping off her coat. "What have you been doing since I saw you at the station?"

"Oh, things." Climbing unsteadily out of his chair, he wavered towards her. "Been here an' there, there an' here." He bowed vaguely, balancing precariously towards her. " 'Tis time for me to leave, fair lady. My humble thanks for your vestal hospitality."



"You can stay if you like. You can sleep here in the living room."

"No, no. Must consider your reputation." He swayed in front of her. "Many, many thanks, angel."

"Call me tomorrow," she said.

"Without fail, dear heart. G'night, sweet princess."

She had to open the door for him.

On an impulse, she went to the telephone. Milo Seymour often read late in the library. She might tell him briefly what had happened and prepare the way for their conference in the morning. But the dialing sound was succeeded by the rhythmic whine of a busy signal.

She was almost ready for bed when the telephone rang.

"I know it's a bad time to be calling you," Jay Rogers' voice said, "but I've just talked to Milo Seymour. I called him right after I left you."

"So that's why I couldn't get him!"

"What's that?" His voice died in a blast of jazz. "I'm running into pretty stiff competition here. . . . I'm in an all-night lunch wagon. It's about two blocks from your place. Looks like a pumpkin."

"Oh, yes, I know the one."

"I thought I'd have some coffee and something to eat. I find I'm starving now." A trombone blared behind him. "I don't suppose you're hungry, are you?"

She said, "Oh, yes!" and then laughed. "I'll be right over."

"You changed your things," he commented when she met him. His eyes had already registered approval of her green coat and the fitted green dress beneath it. She was hatless, but she had tied a ribbon about her loosely combed hair.

"Oh, my," she said, as they began on their eggs and bacon. "This is what I've really needed. Now I can go without sleep for another twenty-four hours. Tell me, what did he say?"

"Nothing much. First I told him who I was. Then I explained how I'd run into you and just what had happened to the envelope. He 'mmmm-hmmmmed' and made various head-nodding noises. When I was through, he said he'd be very happy to see both of us in the morning."

"But he must've said something about the envelope!"

Jay reached for a paper napkin. "No, he didn't."

"Maybe you didn't talk to Mr. Seymour. I mean—if it was Godfrey, the butler, who answered your call, he wouldn't have known what you were talking about—and he wouldn't have wanted to disturb Mr. Seymour at that hour." She slipped from the stool, turning towards the pay telephone. "I'll call the house again!"

"It's pretty late by now," Jay said. "I told Seymour—or Godfrey . . . whichever one it was—we'd be there in the morning. Let's go ahead on that basis."

She came slowly back to the counter. "But being under pressure this way . . ."

"I know. Not exactly a regular thing with you, is it?"

"Well, hardly . . ." But she had known the same feeling of bewildered helplessness, the sense of being trapped.

They talked on and had a second cup of coffee. Then Jay said, "It's time I was getting you home."

He put a bill on the counter and helped her with her coat. It was pleasant in the little diner. There had been a feeling of completeness while they were together. She felt a reluctance to leave.

"Do you live alone?" he asked her as they walked along.

"Yes."

"No family?"

"No," she said. They stopped at the hotel entrance. "Thanks so much for everything you've done."

"I haven't done anything yet." He was watching her.

"Well, coming all the way down here with me. Shall I see you in the morning?"

"I'll call for you at eight-thirty," he said.

WHEN she unlocked the door and switched on the light her heart leaped with fear at sight of the figure stretched out in the chair facing the door. But it was only Keith again. As she was about to close the door, instinct checked her hand. Keith had left her key with her, and she had locked the door when she went to the diner.

Then she saw that his shirt front was stained a deep red and the stain was growing larger. Keith Burgess had been murdered.

With the celerity of a trapped animal she wheeled and stepped into the hall, closing the door behind her. Then she was running down the hall toward the elevator.

Less than fifty feet behind her she heard her door click open and shut. Footsteps were hurrying after her. Then, miraculously, sick with terror and the pounding of her own blood, she was inside the metal cage, pressing the first floor button.

Pressing the button, keeping her thumb against it, she listened to the footsteps, so close that she could hear the clink of jouncing coins, the rasp of quickened breathing. Then the beveled red glass beside her whitening thumb suddenly glowed. The door began to slide shut.

A thick-knuckled hand grasped the edge of the moving panel. The knuckles whitened, halting the door's movement, ready to force it backward. Her hand lunged forward. The key between her fingers, serrated like the blade of an old-fashioned bread knife, slashed viciously at the straining knuckles. And then the hand was gone, spotted with blood. As the door clicked shut, she closed her eyes in relief, descending into safety.

Keith, she thought—murdered by mistake, in her stead. The killer had been waiting for her, to rectify his error.

When the elevator jolted gently to a stop and the brown metal panel slid open, she darted across the lobby and ran into the darkness outside. Almost instantly she blundered into someone. She struck out blindly as masculine arms went tightly around her.

"Wait, now—" The voice was level. "What's up?"

Her head lifted incredulously, seeking the quizzical mouth, the steady blue eyes. "Oh, Jay, Jay! Get me away!"

A taxi rounded the corner. Jay flagged it down, running with her across the street as its door swung open. They scrambled inside.

"Where to, buddy?"

"Just get away from here. I'll tell you where later."

The cab lunged away from the curb. Its movement flung her against him. He put his arms around her.

"Oh, Jay, if you hadn't been there—if you hadn't—"

"I decided to stick around a little while. Tell me what's wrong."

"He's dead," she whimpered. "They killed him."

His hands tightened on her arms. "Who's dead?"

"Keith."

"Who's Keith?"

Even in her hysteria she could recognize the hardening note of suspicion in his voice. The driver seemed to be listening.

"I can't explain here," she whispered. "We'll have to go somewhere."

They found an all-night movie house. The smoking lounge was empty, and he led her to a worn red plush divan in the farthest corner. She had stopped crying, but she was still trembling.

"He was dead," she whispered. "When I unlocked the door, he was sitting in the chair. At first I thought he was sleeping, but then I saw the blood. He must have been shot. He was dead."

"Who is he? What was he doing there?"

"Keith Burgess. I've known him for two years. I saw him at the Glendale station just before I caught the train Friday night. He was drunk and locked out of his hotel. I let him have the key to my apartment over the weekend."

"You didn't tell me that before."

"I forgot all about it!"

"Did you make a habit of letting him have your key?"

His cold voice stung her to anger. "Of course not!"

"Why did you do it Friday night?"

"I've told you! He was in trouble!" She tried to keep her voice from trembling. "Locked out of his hotel—"

"Well, that's trouble enough," Jay admitted. "If he'd been gone a month and then turned up broke—"

"But he didn't!" The scene on the platform flooded back. "He took out a big roll of bills from his pocket. It must have been five hundred or more. . . ."

"Didn't you ask him where he'd got it?"

"I didn't have time."

"What did he do for a living?"

"He was a radio writer."

"Couldn't that money have come from a script?"

"I'm sure it didn't. Only last Wednesday I had a letter from one of the agencies that use his work. They wanted to know where they could reach him."

"Did he vanish like that very often?"

"Frequently. He'd be gone for two and three weeks at a time." Suddenly she remembered. "His forehead! It was badly bruised. He kept saying he had something to tell me, but he couldn't remember what it was."

"You still haven't told me everything, have you?"

It was the question she had feared.

"No," she whispered. "No, I haven't. I can't tell you here. I—I can't look at you and tell you."

"That's crazy."

"Don't say that!"

Her vehemence surprised him.

"All right," he said quietly. "We'll go upstairs. We'll find seats away from everyone."

SITTING beside him in the darkness she whispered her story. "My father died when I was ten. That was in Iowa. He left my mother very little money, and so she had to work until I was seventeen. By that time we'd moved all the way west—to Whitford—where she met Louis Carlin. She married him, and then he adopted me. He was a wonderful man. He'd prospected for gold in Alaska when he was in his teens and after that all through the west. And he was living on the income from some of his mining rights when mother married him. The three of us were very happy together, but he died two years later. He left my mother almost ten thousand dollars in cash, and his various mining claims. His relatives charged they had financed his expeditions and accused my mother of marrying him for his money. We had to put our case in the hands of lawyers.

"My mother was in poor health, and when our case dragged on in the courts for month after month, our money soon went. Then she—she died. That same week I was told the estate would go entirely to me. It was estimated at almost half a million dollars."

"But you said you were a secretary—"

"I never got the money. My stepfather's brother and sister had me declared incompetent."

"On what grounds?"

Even in the dark, she kept her face averted from him. "I'd been under nervous strain, you see. When my mother died, everything seemed to fall out from under me. I—I became apathetic and melancholy. They were able to commit me to a private institution in Whitford as a manic-depressive case. I was there six months."

"Then you were released?"

"Yes."

"How'd that come about?"

"The estate proved to be worthless. It simply wouldn't have been worth their while to continue their suits. Then, too, they had to pay for my—my treatment."

"How long have you been out?"

"Two years now." Her voice seemed to gain in firmness. "I left Whitford and came to Los Angeles. I met Keith Burgess. I did secretarial work for him for a little while. Then I took a better job, which didn't last very long. I'd been out of work a month when I saw Mr. Seymour's want-ad."

"Did you tell Seymour about your trouble?"

"Oh, no! You learn not to, you see. That's why I kept it from you. Everything that's happened to me since Friday night is so unbelievable and—and fantastic . . . well, I knew if I told you about myself, you'd think I had a persecution mania.

"That's about all," she said, low. "I lied to you about getting off the train. Not knowing the name of the town, I mean. It was Whitford, where I—I'd been locked up. I think that's really why I came on to San Francisco. I simply had to get away from Whitford and all it had meant to me." She paused, waiting. "Do you believe me?"

"Yes," he said. "Of course."

Her sigh was barely audible. "Thank you."

He shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "Do you think your relatives might be mixed up in this? Maybe someone's discovered a new vein of ore in one of those claims. Or the first findings might have been wrong."

"I hadn't thought of that," she said. "But I can't believe they'd try to kill me!"

"Maybe they're trying to make you seem to be the victim of hallucinations. Then they can have you declared incompetent a second time."

"But the woman on the train was dead! And whoever killed Keith ran after me!" Her voice had become thin.

He put his arm about her shoulders. "You're dead on your feet, aren't you?"

"If I could only get some sleep."

"Get it, then. I don't think my shoulder's too hard for you," he said. "We've only three or four hours to kill now. You can sleep until morning."

She leaned her head against his shoulder and patted a sudden yawn and then looked at him.

"I don't want you to think," she began. "I mean—when I was committed—"

"I know. You were railroaded. It's been done before."

"I wasn't really sick, you know. I wasn't insane. It was simply a combination of things—grief for my mother and worry about all our legal troubles and just plain physical fatigue. You do believe me, don't you?"

"Yes," he said, and in another moment she was asleep.

His assurance had been glib and instant, but now he wondered. Everything she had told him followed the pattern of delusion. There was no proof at all that there had been any murders. Or if there actually had been two murders she could have committed them.

She had slept three hours in the theater. Afterwards she had gone to the lounge and achieved a sketchy toilet. It had been out of the question to return to the apartment. She would have been unable to face the slight, boyish body sprawled lifeless in the green easy chair.

"Try to forget Burgess," Jay had said. "We'll go back to his case after we've finished the woman and the envelope."

Now they were on the entrance steps before the white marble doorway of the Seymour house and Jay was prodding the bell button.

"Don't be scared," he said.

"I won't," she said. "I'll be all right."

To her surprise, when the great door swung noiselessly open, it was Milo Seymour who stood on the threshold. His horn-rimmed glasses were in his left hand, magnifying quite by accident the wedding ring on his fourth finger. He looked at them for a moment with grave brown eyes—a quiet, aristocratic man in his early fifties, with graying hair and aquiline nose, in a conservative gray flannel jacket and darker gray trousers. He had a wide, thin, intelligent mouth.

He said, "Ah, Miss Carlin . . ." and then, "This must be Mr. Rogers. Please come in." The big door closed behind them "Godfrey isn't here, incidentally. I gave him the week-end off with Mrs. Godfrey."

As they entered the library, Sharon felt confidence and reassurance tentatively return to her. The two weeks she had spent in the book-lined room had been pleasant and desultorily instructive, like an obscure course taught by an unworldly professor.

"Please sit down." Milo Seymour moved to the fireplace, leaning his arm along the mantel. "Now what is this Mr. Rogers tells me has happened to you, Miss Carlin?" He absently traced the intricate lines of a carved griffon with his finger tips.

Sharon said nervously, "It's the envelope I had to deliver, Mr. Seymour. You see, I—"

Jay coughed. "Maybe you'd better start with the train."

Suddenly she was trembling. "I'm not sure I can now."

"You want me to?" he offered.

"Please," she said. "Please do."

At the end of Jay's careful resumé of what Sharon had told him, and of his own part in the events, Milo Seymour put aside the carved griffon. His face was grave.

"Why didn't you notify the San Francisco police about these happenings, Mr. Rogers?"

"In my business, you don't call for the cops every time you get rapped over the head, Mr. Seymour."

"Your business?"

"I run an investigation agency. I think I told you that last night."

"Oh, yes. I remember now."

Jay leaned forward in his chair. "Why did you have her deliver that envelope to me, Mr. Seymour? I've never even heard of you before."

"My dear young man, I've never heard of you, either. I sent no envelope."

Sharon gasped. "But, Mr. Seymour—"

Her employer shook his head. "My child, I most certainly didn't instruct you to go to San Francisco for me." He turned to Jay. "As a matter of fact, I was much disturbed by Miss Carlin's disappearance. I had asked her to work over the week-end, and she had said she'd be happy to do it. When she failed to appear Saturday morning, I was quite disappointed. I finally called her apartment hotel, but the clerk said she had been gone since the previous evening." The door chimes interrupted him. "Please excuse me a moment," he said quietly. He turned and went into the spacious, shadowed hallway.

"He did ask me to make that trip, Jay!" she cried.

He looked at her. "You're forgetting one thing. It was Mrs. Seymour who actually gave you your instructions."

Milo Seymour's voice came to them, saying gravely, "Yes, I've been expecting you, Mr. Brady. . . ."

A sense of impending disaster stirred like a sudden black wind at the back of Sharon's mind. Then the two men entered. The newcomer was the tall, sour-mouthed detective who had taken her off the train at Whitford on Friday night.

"This is Mr. Reese Brady," Milo Seymour said gravely.

"From Whitford." He introduced Jay as a private investigator from San Francisco.

Jay said, "Before we go any farther with this, I'd like to know who Mr. Brady is—what he is—"

Frowning, Brady reached inside his coat and took out a worn pigskin wallet. He flipped it open and held it forward in his palm. The other two men looked at the photostated police officer credentials.

"All right," Jay said. "That suits me." His face was grim. "You here about Miss Carlin?"

Brady nodded.

"You have a warrant?"

The big man shook his head. "I'm not on the force now. Yesterday was my last day in service."

"I think I'd better explain why Mr. Brady is here," Milo Seymour interposed quickly. "Last Thursday I had a long distance call from Whitford, from Dr. Clinton Hartley, in charge of the Whitford Sanitarium, a private hospital for mental patients."

Sharon looked imploringly at Jay, saw distrust and reluctant understanding revealed in his face.

"Dr. Hartley informed me that the young lady I had hired as a secretary had been a patient in his hospital. She had left without permission and had only just been traced to my home. He recommended that I take the proper steps to protect myself and my family. But I sought permission from Dr. Hartley to keep her on as my employee. I said I was confident, thanks to my readings in the field of psychiatry and abnormal psychology, that I could promptly recognize any danger signals that might arise. After pointing out that he must notify her relatives and obtain permission from them for the experiment, he left her temporarily in my hands."

Jay said, "That was only last Thursday?"

"Yes, Mr. Rogers." The gray-haired man rubbed his hands in a movement that conveyed inexpressible regret. "When you called me late last night—early this morning, actually—your remarks about the manila envelope disturbed me. I made a quick investigation of the files in my desk and found that a considerable amount of money had disappeared. Two thousand dollars, in fact. I then called Dr. Hartley. He agreed that Miss Carlin required prompt attention, and after I offered to remunerate her relatives for the necessary expense, he promised to send a representative to Hollywood for her. That representative is Mr. Brady, who resigned from the Whitford police force yesterday and was to begin his duties as a special assistant to Dr. Hartley next Monday."

Jay said, "Why didn't you call the Los Angeles police? Two thousand dollars is a lot of money, Mr. Seymour."

"I have no desire to prosecute this poor child."

"That still doesn't make much sense to me," Jay said crisply. "After all, I was rapped over the head, and that envelope was stolen from my office."

"Did you see your attacker?"

"No, I didn't. I told you that."

"Exactly, Mr. Rogers." Seymour paused. "Miss Carlin then appeared—the first person to find you."

"Of course it's possible she did it," Jay said irritably. "But what would she do with the money?"

Sharon broke into despairing protest. "None of this is true, Jay! I've seen this man before! He's the detective who took me off the train at Whitford!"

The big man shook his head. "I've never seen her before in my life."

"You're lying! You know you are!"

"Really, Miss Carlin—" Milo Seymour turned helplessly to Jay. "I called Dr. Hartley late last night after you had called me, and it was the same man with whom I had talked on Thursday. There was no mistaking his voice. He informed me that Mr. Brady was with him at the moment and would leave shortly after by car. He's come to escort you back, my child. You'll be much safer there."

Sharon started up. Even to her own ears her voice had the ring of hysteria. "Jay, you said you believed me! Don't let this happen to me!"

His voice was emotionless. "What about the two thousand dollars, Mr. Seymour?"

"When this poor child's mind is lucid again, she'll undoubtedly remember where she's hidden the money. Neither my wife nor I wish to prosecute."

His words goaded her into desperate hopefulness. "Your wife, Mr. Seymour! She can tell you the truth about me! She knew I was going to San Francisco!"

"That's right; I'd forgotten about that!" Jay said. "It was your wife who gave your instructions to Miss Carlin last Friday afternoon."

"She did, Mr. Seymour!" New hope burned inside her. "She called me at the restaurant during lunch on Friday. I'd told you I'd be there, you know."

The wide, thin mouth closed in pursed reluctance. "I'm afraid you're very much mistaken, my dear."

Jay's voice said, low and troubled, "I think we ought to talk to your wife, Mr. Seymour."

Milo Seymour folded and unfolded his horn-rimmed glasses in his hands. "Unfortunately my wife's nerves haven't been too settled lately. She's upstairs packing at the moment. Only yesterday we decided to go up to our mountain cabin this afternoon for a week's stay."

"I'd still like to talk to her, Mr. Seymour."

"Very well sir." He spread his hands. "If you'll excuse me, then."

After the gray-haired man had gone, the room was frighteningly quiet.

"Jay, you must believe—" Sharon began.

"Wait," he said. "Just relax."

But she tensed as footsteps were heard again in the hall. Then they were in the room.

"Gentlemen," said the gray-haired man— "my wife."

As Jay rose from his chair to acknowledge the introduction, Sharon leaned forward in shocked incredulity.

The woman beside Milo Seymour wasn't Romelle Seymour. It was the woman she had seen dead on the train.

THE two men mumbled undistinguishable greetings as Milo Seymour made his introduction.

The woman said, "Good morning, gentlemen," and moved toward Sharon. "I'm so glad to see you back, my child." She put out her hand and light flashed from the heavy ring on her finger.

Sharon stood up quickly, stepping back from her. "You're not Mrs. Seymour!" She swung around. "Jay, this woman's an impostor!"

His silence turned her fear to ice inside her, all too reminiscent of other dark days when she had been goaded into doubting her own mind.

Milo Seymour said, "I don't know if you still wish to question my wife, Mr. Rogers."

His voice was flat, lifeless. "I think so."

"It's about a telephone call Miss Carlin says she received from you, dearest—"

"Telephone call? I've never had any reason to call her."

Milo Seymour nodded to Reese Brady. "I think you'd better make arrangements to take her with you now."

"I won't go! Jay, you can't let them do this to me!"

Jay said slowly, "I know this will sound impertinent to you, Mr. Seymour, but I'd like to have proof this woman is really your wife. If there's a servant or somebody in the house—"

The gray-haired man said patiently, "I've already told you the Godfreys aren't here."

"The chauffeur—Steve Cresca! He'll know she isn't Mrs. Seymour!" Sharon cried.

"How about that, Mr. Seymour? Will you ask your chauffeur to identify your wife for me?" Jay asked.

The soft voice no longer concealed its irritation. "Really, Mr. Rogers, we've been quite patient—"

"I said it was an impertinence, but certain things have happened to me that make it hard for me to discount Miss Carlin's story entirely. Moreover, last night, when Miss Carlin entered her apartment, she found a man there."

Instantly the atmosphere was tense and guarded.

"The man proved to be an acquaintance," Jay went on. "She had lent him her apartment over the week-end. He left immediately when she arrived. A few minutes later I called her to tell her I'd spoken to you on the phone. She then joined me in a nearby lunch wagon, where we ate and talked for about half an hour. After I walked home with her, I stayed downstairs on the sidewalk. Within five minutes Miss Carlin came running out of the building. She was hysterical with fear. You see, she'd gone upstairs to find her friend there, murdered."

Reese Brady addressed Jay in his strident voice. "Did you see the body, Rogers?"

"No, I didn't. As it turned out, the killer was in the room and made after Miss Carlin, but she got away."

"Did you see who it was?"

Jay shook his head. "Why do you want to know if I saw the body?"

"For a pretty good reason, Rogers. I went to Miss Carlin's apartment just before I came here. Dr. Hartley and I figured she might've hidden Mr. Seymour's money there. Her apartment was empty. There wasn't any sign of a struggle or any sort of violence having taken place. Nothing was touched, and the money wasn't on the premises."

The silence pressed achingly at her brain.

At last Milo Seymour shrugged. "Well, Mr. Rogers . . ." His voice was heavy with regret. "This poor child has definite delusions of persecution. I've read about such cases, but never before have I personally observed them. I don't know what your experience has been."

"I know about them," Jay said shortly. "I've seen a few cases in the service."

Sharon's blood ebbed from her heart in chill despair.

Jay said, "I'd still like to talk to the chauffeur."

Milo Seymour said slowly, "Very well. I'll get him."

"You don't have to go for him. Can't you call him?"

"Well, if he's in the garage. . . ." Picking up a house telephone from the desk, the gray-haired man waited a long moment. "Cresca?" he said finally. "Come in the house, please—right away. I'm in the library."

He replaced the receiver with a decisive click. And almost at once the telephone rang.

Milo Seymour answered. "Hello? . . . oh, yes—speaking . . . No, not at all. I'm sure there will be no trouble . . ." he turned to Jay, "This is Dr. Hartley calling from Whitford. I want you to talk to him, Mr. Rogers."

As Jay took the telephone from the ringed hand Sharon tried to blot out all the indelible memories of Whitford—the barred windows, the gray drowse of barbituates.

"Hello, doctor," Jay said, and listened. "Yes, that's right. There's a Reese Brady here who tells me—" The unheard voice on the wire interrupted him for several moments. "I see. Miss Carlin told me about being committed to your sanitarium, but as a manic-depressive case. . . ." And finally, "Yes, that's what I wanted to know."

"It's all a trick! It can't be Dr. Hartley!" Sharon wrenched the receiver from his hand. She said slowly, "This is Sharon Carlin."

"Oh, yes, Sharon!" The three simple words were enough—the unforgettable blandness, the hygienic gentleness. "You remember me, don't you?"

She whispered, "Yes, doctor, I—I remember," and then dropped the receiver.

In the long moment of silence Steve Cresca entered the room, a dark little man in his middle thirties, with a tight mouth and small, pointed ears and black corrugated hair wearing thin at the temples.

"You wanted me, Mr. Seymour?"

"Well, yes, Cresca . . ." The gray-haired man hesitated. "If you're still not satisfied, Mr. Rogers—"

Jay turned slowly to the smaller man. "When did you last see Mrs. Seymour, Cresca?"

"Well, she's right here," said Cresca.

"No, no!" Sharon cried. "Cresca, you know that isn't true!"

Milo Seymour said, "Thank you, Cresca. That's all we wanted to know."

Puzzled, the chauffeur walked out of the room.

Milo Seymour said gently, "Are you ready to go now, my dear?"

All at once she was unutterably tired. They sensed her submission. Reese Brady stepped heavily forward.

"Please don't touch me," she said.

She walked past Jay without a backward glance, sustained by a curious dignity.

REESE BRADY, with Sharon beside him, had driven away from the house in low gear and stopped halfway down the block.

Sharon said, "What are you going to do with me?"

Brady ignored her, his eyes on the block ahead of them. He was frightened, she suddenly realized. But he was more formidable when frightened.

Sitting in silence she wondered about Jay and what he was doing in the house. He had done his utmost to help her, but the opposition had been too cunning for him. Now he would never know the truth about her. All their hours together since she had walked into his office six hundred miles away had been indelibly memorable, and the sum total was love. She was shaken by a sudden sense of bereavement.

"Okay," Brady's voice rasped. "We can go now."

Then she saw why they had been waiting. Jay emerged from the Seymour gateway and walked towards the boulevard. She watched his retreating back, listening to her heart beat slowly and painfully in farewell.

Then Brady drove back to the house and halted the car in the empty service court. At the muted blast of the horn, Cresca came out in his shirt sleeves.

"Inside," he ordered in his curt, guttural voice.

She followed Cresca in while Brady trod heavily behind her. They went on to the front part of the house, towards the murmur of voices in the library.

As she crossed the threshold, the killer from the train stood at the fireplace, staring blankly at her with his slaty, heavy-lidded eyes. She halted, and Brady pushed her forward. The woman she had once thought was dead watched her from the chair at the fireplace.

Then Milo Seymour murmured, "Welcome back, my dear." The thin mouth twisted now with hidden amusement, betraying vast egotism behind the scholarly face. She could sense that her torment provided him with an almost sensuous delight.

He tapped a book in his hand. "I was about to read to them. An instructive passage from von Clausevitz on the element of chance in war."

The woman said fretfully, "For God's sake, Milo."

Reese Brady said harshly, "The hell with that, Milo. This thing's got out of hand. We're in a jam."

The tallow-faced man mumbled, "Irene and me did our job. It was Brady who loused things up for us."

Brady turned on him. "Listen, Maddox—"

Milo Seymour said sharply, "Quiet, all of you," and then, in the sudden silence, "Sit down, Miss Carlin."

As he put down the book, she realized the ring on his third finger wasn't the wedding ring he had originally worn. The chauffeur was pushing her into a chair.

Brady muttered, "If I'd known it'd work out like this—"

"Our alibis will still be incontrovertible." The voice was silken.

"But that kid—"

"I don't think we need concern ourselves about Mr. Rogers. He was thoroughly convinced of our innocence when he left here."

The killer from the train said, "That call from Hartley was a lucky break, all right."

"Not luck at all, Duke. I got in touch with Hartley immediately after young Rogers called me last night. I asked him to call me back at ten this morning. I leave nothing to chance, you see."

Sharon's eyes came open, wide with new apprehension. "Is Dr. Hartley working with you, too?"

"No, my dear." A complacent hand touched his graying hair. "We know the good doctor is susceptible to money—for an adequate fee he'll diagnose a harmless neurosis as a dangerous psychosis, won't he?—but this time he's an innocent pawn. When he first called me about you, it was of his own volition. It seems he had just received an anonymous note about your whereabouts."

"Then he can mean trouble for you," Sharon said quickly. "If Jay Rogers checks with him later—"

Seymour spread his hands in suave negation. "It will be young Mr. Rogers' unsupported word against mine. I'll swear I've never seen him, if necessary."

Reese Brady moved with ponderous impatience. "I've seen too many smart alibis blasted to bits to feel good about this. We've got to work fast."

"We're already working," Seymour said coldly. "Now we shall go up to the mountains."

"That's crazy!" Irene Maddox cried out. "You told Rogers that's where we were going! It's only begging for trouble!"

"On the contrary, it's imperative that we go to the cabin now. I've already pointed his attention there, and deliberately so. When he reads what's occurred there—as he's certain to do—he'll realize the unfortunate incident is exactly what he should have expected."

Duke Maddox said, "Who's going up there?"

"All of us. Immediately."

Reese Brady seemed to bristle. "Not me, Milo!"

"Of course not," the soft voice agreed smoothly. "You'll leave right away—before we get started—just as we planned."

Maddox jerked his head at Sharon. "She going with Brady?"

She was on her feet, shrill with desperation. "I won't go back to Whitford! I won't, I won't!"

"Of course you won't." He turned to the big man behind her. "By the way, Brady, you might give me Miss Carlin's nail file. I'm sure you have no further use for it now." Then the quiet voice took on a purring, feline quality. "You needn't worry about Whitford, my dear. You'll accompany us to the mountains, of course. Without you, our trip would be wasted."

"YES, young man?" the woman at the switchboard said.

"Miss Carlin's apartment is on the fifth floor, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is. Five-one-seven."

Jay walked briskly back to the open elevator, disregarding her "Who shall I say is call—"

Sharon's door, he found, was locked. He took his key ring from his pocket and selected a master key that opened it. He moved quickly through the apartment. Brady had been right. The place was undisturbed. Her wild flight from the empty apartment had been prompted by the phantoms in her own mind.

Suddenly weary, Jay sat down in the green easy chair, elbows on his knees, head buried in his hands.

He was in love with her. Unaccountably, foolishly, the words of the marriage service were in his head—*With this ring, I thee wed*—and then. . . .

"The ring!" he cried aloud. "That ring!" Straightening in sudden excitement, he struck his closed fist against the arm rest. "That first time—behind his glasses—and then *she* had it on—"

Then he was abruptly still. The chair covering under his hand was damp for a radius of several inches, dry beyond. He rose and knelt on the floor beside it, examining the damp spot more closely. He examined the carpet. There was a damp area only two feet from the chair. He moved towards the door on his hands and knees. A third stain had been removed, then another and another. He followed the broken trail to the door.

He paused in the doorway, listening for the elevator. It was idle. He stooped low over the hall carpeting, exploring again with his hands, going towards the elevator for several feet and then back again past the open door, in the opposite direction. He straightened, frowning. The carpeting was dry in both directions. The bleeding had evidently been stopped, but it would still have been a ticklish job to get a dead man out of an apartment building, even at night.

He listened at the door on the left of Sharon's. It was silent. He took out his key. He rapped quietly. There was no answer. He unlocked the door.

The apartment had the intangible air of vacancy, of being left unoccupied for the week-end. Closing the door behind him, he went quietly through it. In the bedroom he twisted the handle of the closed closet door. It was locked. He took out the key ring from his pocket with shaking hands.

The light in the closet failed to work when he pulled the dangling chain. He took out matches and struck one. The tawny light glowed in his cupped hand. Then he stood still, looking at the body of Keith Burgess under the racked suits and dresses.

THE plainclothesman said suspiciously, "How'd you really find out about this stiff?"

"I've told you already," Jay said desperately. "You can see he's dead, and you can't do a thing for him now. But that girl—" He broke off.

Voices came from the bedroom, where the police were taking measurements and photographs.

The telephone rang and the detective turned to the instrument on the secretary desk. "Lowry speaking . . ." and when he hung up, "Medical examiner's on his way up."

Presently the door opened and a wrinkled little man carrying a black bag entered the room, went silently past them into the bedroom

Jay said, "Lowry, give me a chance to—" and the telephone rang again.

Lowry lifted the receiver. "Yeah? . . . okay—put him on. . . ." He said, "That call we put through to Whitford, Rogers . . ." "What's that? . . . Sure, sure. . . . Where is he now?. . . Okay. . . . Yeah—check on it and get back to me."

He cradled the receiver, turning back to Jay. "There's a Brady been on the Whitford force for twelve years. Quit yesterday. Goes to work for the Whitford sanitarium tomorrow. That should be enough to convince you the girl's a nut."

Jay said, "Didn't you ever hear of a crooked cop?"

The brick-red face darkened. "I've heard of crooked two-bit private eyes."

"Ah, for God's sake," Jay said despairingly. "A poor benighted Igorot would give me more co-operation—"

"What's that Igorot business?" Lowry demanded.

"They're Philippine natives. Head hunters. God knows they're pretty primitive—but for sheer cussed stupidity—"

"How do you know about them?"

"I was in the Philippines five years. I'd be better off if I'd stayed there."

"What do you mean—five years?"

"I was with the guerillas. But I didn't call you in to give you the story of my life."

"You do very much damage to those sons of Bushido?"

"Enough." Jay pulled his trouser leg up from his ankle. "They did some to me, too. . . ." His leg was tattooed with a network of healed scars. "Ulcerated sores did that—and then bamboo rod treatments. . . ."

A voice called, "Will you come in here a minute, Lowry?"

The big detective looked at Jay a long moment, then said, "Take it easy, Rogers," and went into the bedroom.

The instant Lowry had left him he knew what he would do. It was what he should have done in the first place: go back to the Seymour house alone.

THE powerful limousine climbed the twisting mountain highway. Wedged between Milo Seymour and Irene Maddox on the back seat, Sharon looked out at the rugged landscape slipping past. In the front seat Duke Maddox sat in sullen silence beside Steve Cresca. There was no traffic approaching them. Cresca increased their speed.

"Watch yourself," Milo Seymour said sharply. "Don't go too fast. We don't want to be picked up by an officious highway patrol."

"What are you going to do with me?" Sharon demanded.

"That would appear to be an unnecessary question."

"Where is Mrs. Seymour?"

"To the right of you, as you can easily see."

"There's no need for your farce any more!" Sudden reckless anger blazed through her. "You murderer!"

His spatulate fingers touched the points of his handkerchief in his breast pocket. "Sit back, Miss Carlin, and enjoy your ride."

She closed her eyes against the relentless glare of the sun, fighting back the sting of tears. Nothing had mattered since the moment Jay had left her, walking briskly towards the boulevard, unaware she was sitting in the drab little sedan only three hundred yards away from him. It seemed senseless to try to stay alive without him. Since they intended to kill her, it would be simple enough to throw herself from the car. If they tried to stop her, she could force them to kill her in the car.

As they rounded an ascending curve, the engine began to cough and falter. The big car jerked.

"What's wrong, Cresca?"

"Choking up on me," the chauffeur muttered, scowling. He swung the car off the pavement, pulled back the emergency brake. The engine died before his hand touched the ignition key.

For the first time Sharon saw Milo Seymour lose his temper. "You fool, Cresca!" A wormy vein throbbed a blue danger signal in his right temple. "It's your duty to see these things don't happen!"

"Well, jeez, Milo—" The starter growled under the chauffeur's foot, but the engine refused to start.

"Do something!" Seymour commanded furiously.

Cresca stepped down to the gravel and walked around the front of the car, cursing. The hood went up in a flash of reflected sunlight.

Duke Maddox turned a worried face from the front seat. "I don't like the way our luck's running, Milo. What about your alibi?"

"We'll all get back to town in time."

"If Steve starts it."

"He has to! I won't tolerate any more delays!"

Maddox grumbled. "The way our luck's been running—"

Sunlight flashed off his ornate ring as the gray-haired man abruptly struck the back of the seat. "Stop it!"

Cresca came to the window. "It don't look so good, Milo. I won't know till I take it down."

"How long will that take you?"

"Half an hour—more, maybe. . . ."

Several cars hissed past them on the highway.

"We can't stay here," the gray-haired man said shortly. "I noticed a side road just below that cattle stop."

"That's two miles back!"

"We have to stay hidden while you work, Cresca. Someone might talk later."

The chauffeur shrugged. "Duke'll have to push me."

Glowering, Maddox stepped down while Cresca climbed behind the wheel. The highway was momentarily clear in both directions when the car began to roll silently down the curving grade. Two miles down, Cresca swung the wheel to the right. Their tires scraped against the uneven ruts of a single-lane gravel road. He brought the car to a stop.

Duke Maddox joined him as he stepped down from the car. They went around and unlocked the luggage compartment. A bird sang somewhere in the trees—a thin, sweet, lonely call—and Irene Maddox shivered.

Sharon said, suddenly, recklessly, "You're afraid, aren't you? You're all getting scared! You're afraid of being found out. You've killed Mrs. Seymour, and now you have to get rid of her body." The smug amusement hovering behind his bland face goaded her on. "You've had to change your way of blaming me for her murder!"

"What makes you think that?"

"There's no need to keep up your game with me, Mr. Seymour—if that's your name."

"It's been Seymour for many years, my dear. For more years back than anyone will bother to trace me. My origins were obscure, and there were occasional aliases in my earlier days, but I've no police record."

Irene Maddox said nervously, "For God's sake, Milo, don't start blabbing to her."

"Ever a devotee of the blunt phrase, aren't you, Irene?" His irritability was close to the surface again. "But nothing I tell her will ever be repeated."

Sharon said, "That's because you're going to kill me. And I know why. Because you're insane."

His voice tightened. "That is most amusing."

"You're a sick man, Mr. Seymour." She had to fight to keep her voice steady and unafraid. "Delusion of grandeur. That's your sickness. Your vanity, your twisted logic, this scheme of yours which gives you so much satisfaction . . . they all add up to insanity."

His mouth twitched. "That will do."

"You're afraid of what I'm saying. You're thinking of the moments when you have such agonizing doubts—those glimpses of gibbering darkness—"

His eyes seemed to dilate in sudden brightness above his flaring nostrils and strained mouth. Then he struck her savagely across the left temple, just behind the eye. Unconsciousness smothered her.

AFTER a time she became aware of the fluctuating murmur of two voices. Then the bird call she had heard when Cresca had stopped the car came to her again. She knew she was still in the car, lying slumped against the seat between Irene Maddox and Milo Seymour.

"—have no feeling for the irony of the situation, Irene." It was Seymour's voice. "The half-hearted gambler would have been content with fifty thousand or so in insurance—and then he'd have found himself investigated by the insurance company. But that isn't my way, Irene. My poor wife dies quite suddenly over the week-end—and leaves no insurance, poor soul. Instead, her estate is handed over to me without question—three million dollars of it." He laughed softly. "A pity this poor child can never realize how much she's worth to me."

"Maybe we made a mistake in picking her for this," the Maddox woman said worriedly.

"Irene, she's our perfect choice. The moment I checked past her references and learned she'd withheld her manic-depressive period from me, I knew she was ideal for my purposes. And then, of course, when Brady recognized her . . . well, there was no need to look further. "There wasn't a single loophole. Brady would have taken her to the Whitford jail and booked her on a disorderly conduct charge. The liquor and the blow on the head from Duke's gun would have made her appear drunk. She'd have babbled about a murdered woman. She'd have been locked up for the night." His voice hardened. "That's how it would have been, if Duke hadn't made the stupid blunder of looking from the train window."

"That mightn't have mattered," the rabbity-mouthed woman said defensively. "What ruined everything was using Rogers' real name on that envelope. If we hadn't picked a real name from the phone book we wouldn't have had to slug Rogers to get the envelope back."

"I'll grant you the girl was never intended to reach Rogers' office, but the whole scheme would have seemed incomplete to me if I had used a fictitious name. That's why I had Romelle call the girl. Because of my thoroughness—because of the delicious irony of the situation—"

Irene Maddox shifted impatiently. "I won't feel safe until this thing's all over!"

"You have a pessimistic nature, Irene. Even if it were over, you would still be fretful. Even if this child had already been cut down from the cell bars in Whitford—"

All at once the puzzle became a vivid picture to Sharon. She could see her lifeless body dangling from the cell window. She shuddered with nausea.

"She's come to, Milo! She's been listening!"

Opening her eyes, Sharon looked directly at Milo Seymour. He shrugged. "Do you think that really matters now, Irene?"

His old mocking urbanity had returned. His conceit demanded a spotlight.

"I know you meant to kill me in that jail," Sharon said slowly. "And I know why. You intended my death to look like suicide, didn't you? Then the news about Mrs. Seymour's murder would have come through, and the police would have been sure I'd killed myself because I'd been arrested while running away after murdering my employer's wife. But what was in that sealed envelope?"

"Don't tell her, Milo! Don't start blabbing!"

It was an indiscreet choice of words. Irritability flickered across the bland face. He spoke with icy precision. "I can reveal every detail of my plans to her and still not jeopardize my security one iota. You're right, Miss Carlin, your death was meant to look like suicide. Brady was supposed to come back to your cell during the night and kill you. You would have been found in the morning, strung up with your purse string or your stockings. Brady was to destroy the envelope and leave the contents—two thousand dollars—in your purse. Theft would have been the reason for killing my poor wife—she'd found you out, you see." He paused, covertly watching her face for her reaction. "And then, we had your past history for the final touch—your six months in the mental hospital."

Sharon whispered, cold-lipped, "But—but Keith . . . why did you have to kill him?"

"Oh, yes—your drunken friend . . . You see, he wasn't on your list of references, but our investigation showed you had worked for him. Duke looked him up and asked him about your stay in the sanitarium. That was a mistake. Burgess called the house shortly after that and wanted to speak to you. I told him you were out and discreetly asked why he had called. He wanted to know why you hadn't told him about your little mental lapse, and how Duke had managed to find it out. Although I managed to fend him off at the moment, I knew he was potentially dangerous. It wouldn't have done for the police to learn I knew you'd been in a mental hospital, would it? Unfortunately Burgess vanished from sight when Duke went back to look for him—embarked on another of his alcoholic odysseys. He didn't turn up again until the night you found him dead in your apartment. He'd come back to tell you what he'd been unable to tell you at the station Friday night. Duke got that much from him before he was forced to dispose of him."

Sharon shivered. "I—I still don't understand you. Your wife loved you, and you were so attentive to her. You lived such a quiet life—those researches into ancient ceramics."

"Oh, yes—quite an amusing touch, I thought."

"And you've done all this for her money!"

He laughed softly. "Really, Miss Carlin, do you think I shall be content to retire on the strength of this one coup?" He shook his head. "Oh, no. I've planned this for years. This is only the beginning of what I can accomplish in a world where cunning and ruthlessness and unscrupulousness pay such enormous dividends. I was never meant to be a rich woman's lapdog."

"I GUESS this'll do it, Milo." Cresca slid behind the steering wheel. The engine roared in several experimental bursts of power and then settled down.

Dusk had fallen by the time they reached the private road which led to the cabin. Ahead of them the lake glinted like polished macadam. The cabin loomed up on a bluff overlooking the lake—a substantial structure of hewn square logs. Irregular stone steps led the way from the road up to the roofed front porch.

"Bring the luggage up, Cresca."

They went up the steps in single file, and then, waiting for Seymour to unlock the cabin door, they stood in a huddled group on the wide porch.

A typical cabin interior was revealed when the oil lamp was lighted on the big round table. A great stone fireplace dominated the living room. Opposite it a balcony overlooked the room, leading to the upstairs bedrooms.

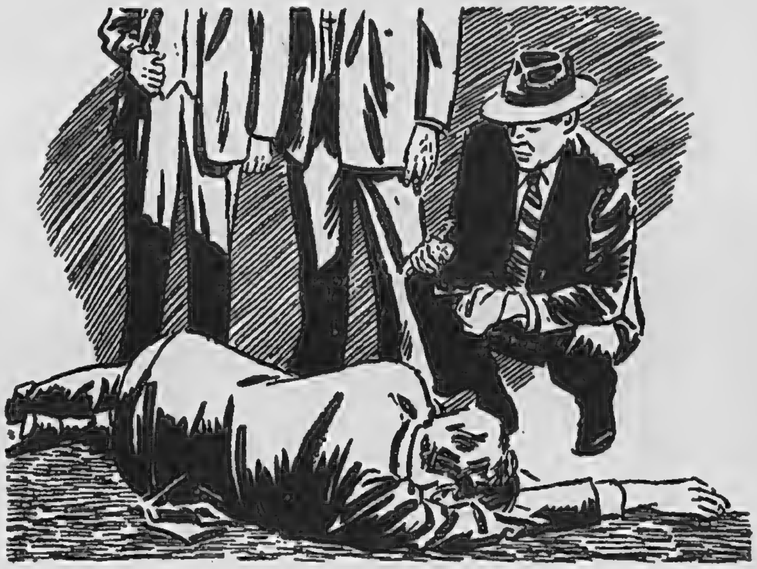
Irene Maddox said nervously, "Let's hurry it up."

Milo Seymour nodded at the other two men: "Bring her in," and then, as they turned away, "You'd better leave me your gun, Duke." He put the revolver in his pocket. "Be careful down below. Don't leave any marks that might arouse suspicion."

Standing beside the fireplace, afraid to move, Sharon watched Cresca and Maddox go outside. Milo Seymour stood beside the round table, his mouth drawn taut. Irene Maddox took cigarettes from her purse.

He ordered quickly, "Put them away. I don't want any evidence left behind. She didn't smoke."

Sullenly the rabbity-mouthed woman closed her purse,



and he gestured peremptorily. "Take her bags upstairs. Start unpacking."

Then Sharon was alone with him. There was no noise outside except the night birds calling and the vast, murmurous clamor of the crickets. Her mind pictured the two men climbing the stone steps with their helpless burden, and horror crawled through her.

"How are you going to kill me?"

"Your interest is rather masochistic, don't you think?"

"Tell me!" she cried. "I have a right to know!"

But footsteps already whispered outside on the porch. Sickness climbed abruptly in her rigid throat.

He turned. "Well, Cresca—"

"Cresca's busy," a curt voice answered. "His friend's tied up, too. I wouldn't move, Seymour." It was Jay who stood in the doorway, a blue service revolver in hand. "My finger feels very nervous by now."

SHE ran towards him in an impulsive movement of thankfulness.

"Jay!"

"Don't come near me," he said crisply. "I don't want you getting in the line of fire." His eyes remained on Seymour with unwavering directness. "I'm not taking any chances with our friend here."

Circuitously, she made her way towards him along the walls.

Milo Seymour kept his hands carefully at his sides. "What does this mean, Rogers?"

"Just what you think it means."

"I demand an explanation—"

"You demand a thumb in your eye," Jay said flatly. "You've outsmarted yourself this time."

Sharon reached the doorway behind him. He still kept his eyes on his target. She stepped towards him, touching his free hand, almost timorously. Not looking at her, he reached out his left arm and drew her to him.

The sleek brown eyes watched them, at once guarded and derisive, as though Seymour contemplated mockery as a new weapon. "Very touching."

"I'm glad you think so."

"What did you do to Cresca and Maddox?"

"I told you they were tied up."

"Were you waiting for us?" Anxiety lingered behind the easy manner.

Jay said, "You'll find out at your trial, Seymour. It'll give me the greatest of pleasure to testify against you and your playmates." He smiled thinly. "What delayed you?"

"The car broke down," Sharon explained quickly. "It held us up almost two hours."

"Well, they had a two-hour start on me—almost too good a handicap—"

A voice from the balcony said, "Still good enough," and Jay, startled, caught off-guard, looked up at the woman from the train.

In the same instant Sharon saw Seymour flash his hand inside his coat. She cried out, "Jay!" and lunged desperately against him. The revolver made a soft *ptt!* in the quiet cabin. Jay swore sharply and dropped his gun—the shot had creased his right arm. His free hand went instinctively to his forearm as the gun fell to the figured Navajo rug.

THE gray-haired man snapped, "Stay where you are." There was a neat hole in Seymour's coat, the acrid smell of singed cloth. But he seemed more physically alert and efficient than ever before. "Now kick it over here."

His gun came up as Jay moved.

"Not you," he said. "Miss Carlin."

Trembling, Sharon flicked the gun towards him.

He moved his free hand in a grateful salute at Irene Maddox as she descended the stairs from the balcony. "Thank you, my dear." He smiled compassionately at Jay. "Overconfidence, Rogers. It's spelled disaster for more than one man before you."

"As you've found out?" Jay took his hand from his arm. There was no blood. The bullet had grazed the skin. "Right, Seymour?"

"Not quite, I'm happy to say." Seymour nodded again as the woman from the train picked up the service revolver from the floor. "See what happened to Duke and Cresca. Bring them in here."

The minutes passed in a breathless hush. Then footsteps scraped outside on the porch.

Irene Maddox said, "He jumped them from behind—tied them up with their own ties—" and Cresca and Maddox followed her into the room, sullen with rage.

The little chauffeur went past them without a word.

Duke Maddox walked directly to the table, holding the service revolver the woman had given him. "We better trade, Milo." There was a silent exchange of weapons. "You frisk him?"

The squat, pudgy man walked noiselessly behind her and then patted Jay's clothes from behind. He came around Jay on the other side; then, without warning, he struck Jay under the left eye with the butt of his revolver. Sharon gasped. Blood ran from an ugly gash.

"That's for the restaurant, Joe. I don't buy coffee in my lap," Duke Maddox said.

Sharon whispered agonizedly, "Oh, Jay, Jay," and stepped toward him.

Milo Seymour said, "Miss Carlin, I wouldn't advise you to move."

She stood motionless, trembling.

"Now, Mr. Rogers . . . " The gray-haired man stepped forward, placing the service revolver on the table. "I want to know how you got here, and I might warn you I have neither the time nor the inclination for delay."

Jay shrugged, grimacing at the blood trickling down his face. "This stuff's getting a little messy."

"Miss Carlin may give you a handkerchief."

She said, bleakly, "I—I haven't any. My purse is gone."

"There's one in my righthand pocket," Jay said.

The brown eyes narrowed, watching her. "Take it out."

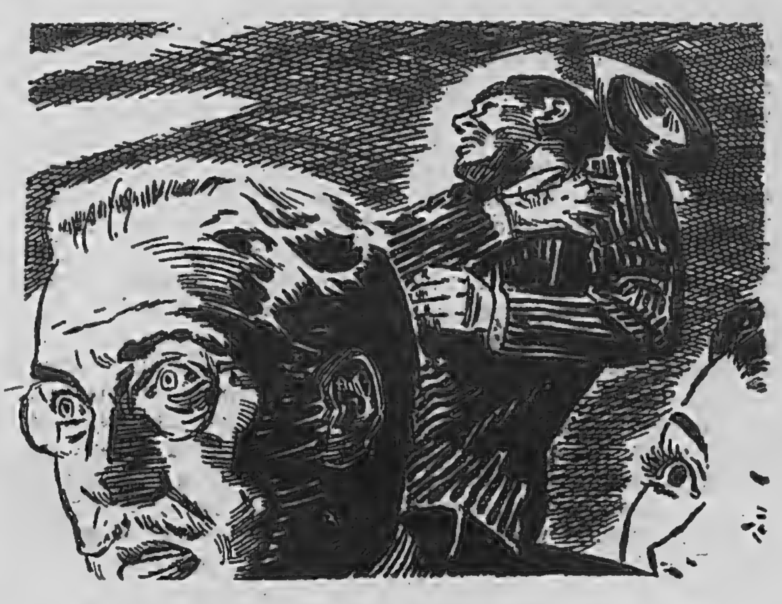
Her hand went trembling into his coat pocket. She touched a folded handkerchief and a key ring. On an impulse, she slipped the keys inside the handkerchief and handed it to him. His face was impassive. He blotted the blood from his cheek with the folded linen.

"Now talk, sir. Explain."

"It's all pretty simple," Jay said casually. "When I went back to the house, you were already gone. I went through your desk in the library until I found an old tax receipt that gave the location of your cabin. Then I hired a self-drive car in a hurry and drove up here. I knew I was two hours behind you, but I had to take the chance. You were kind enough to get stalled on the way, though. That put you four minutes behind me."

"What made you come back after us?"

"Just a hunch. I remembered the wedding ring that switched hands." He grinned as Irene Maddox started involuntarily. "That's right, duchess. Seymour was wearing it when we first came in the house. But when you came back with him you were wearing it. He had on the one he's wearing now. I decided you'd killed Mrs. Seymour—"



"You happen to be looking at Mrs. Seymour."

"He's lying, Jay!"

"I know he is, honey. Maddox and Cresca were pulling her out of the back of the car when I tangled with them. She's very much dead."

No one spoke for a moment. They stood in a menacing half-circle behind the rustic table. Then Jay said, "I know one thing. With a corpse on your hands, you've got to work fast. Suppose I tell you the police know all about you."

Seymour smiled, swinging his glasses gently between his hands. "You wouldn't be here alone if you'd notified the police."

"Aren't you taking a big chance on that?"

"I've taken no risks. I've been forced to rearrange my plans most hastily, and yet it's for the better. To complete my story for your benefit, Miss Carlin—your body will be found not far from here—and in a place where it will easily be found. A broken neck sustained in a fall in the dark, the police will say. They'll be quite certain it happened in your mad flight after killing my wife here in the cabin." He folded his glasses and dropped them into his pocket. "Originally I was quite sure you wouldn't question it, Mr. Rogers, for it would come out that she had escaped from Brady."

"I suppose Brady's already called Whitford about her escape?"

"He was left behind for that purpose."

"What about me?"

"You will be one of those unfortunates who step off the face of the earth, Mr. Rogers. No one will ever know what happened to you."

Sharon cried out, "He's insane, Jay. I know he is!"

For a moment the brown eyes dilated dangerously. "I warned you before—" Then the moment was past. "My dear child, others will judge my sanity—not you. In less than half an hour Cresca will drive me to the village across the lake. I shall be in obvious pain. There's no local doctor, and the druggist will be unable to help me. I shall then telephone here and tell my dear wife" —he bowed ironically towards Irene Maddox—"that I must return to Hollywood to consult my personal physician. She will urge me to leave immediately, of course, and assure me she doesn't at all mind being left alone overnight. Irene and her consort will then return to Hollywood in Mr. Rogers' car, and tomorrow Mrs. Godfrey will come up here. . . ."

"It all adds up to a pretty picture for you," Jay said slowly, dabbing his cheek. "I detect a few flaws in it, though. For one thing, I'd like to know how you're going to dispose of us if you can't put your hands on us—"

As he spoke, the wadded handkerchief, weighted with his keys, catapulted at the pudgy face above the gun. The missile was only midway in its trajectory as he pulled Sharon to the floor and kicked over the table and flung himself down beside her. The oil lamp and the service revolver crashed to the floor as Duke Maddox shot at him. The faint, sinister *pttt!* was barely audible in the sudden darkness, but Jay's involuntary cry of pain sent a shudder of shock stabbing through Sharon.

Then there was aching silence.

Milo Seymour said, tentatively, "Well, Rogers . . . "

All at once Sharon's heart stopped for a breathless moment. Fingers were closing about her wrist—gently. He was still alive. He was warning her to be still.

"I got him," Duke said.

"Sure you did," said Cresca.

She was conscious of silent movement beside her. His other hand was exploring the floor, groping for his fallen revolver. She reached out, feeling the floor beyond the Navajo rug.

"Are you sure, Duke?"

The flat, toneless voice said, "Strike a light. I'll have him covered."

Then Irene Maddox said sharply, urgently, "Listen!"

Again the straining quiet of listening. Then, still groping for the revolver, Sharon could hear the hum of an approaching car.

"COPS, Milo—" It was Cresca.

"I told you! the woman cried furiously. "I told you!"

"Shut up." The voice was abruptly frigid and implacable. "Don't lose your heads, any of you. Make sure of them first, Duke, Then we'll get away. There's a launch in the boathouse."

Their hands touched and quickly separated, still seeking the revolver.

Cresca said, "We can't get away on the lake, Milo. The village is no place to go to."

"We won't be in the launch. We'll jam the controls and let them think we're in it. Some of them are bound to start after us. We'll take care of the others and get away in the car."

"It won't work, Milo! It's too late!"

"We'll do as I say," Seymour said coldly.

And then the cold touch of steel was against Sharon's fingertips. She strained towards it, goaded by the sound of a match being torn from a match book. Then it was in her hands. She slid it across the rug towards Jay. His fingers tightened about it as a match flared.

Milo Seymour stood tensely behind the flame. Irene Maddox was slightly behind him, Cresca crouched beside her. To their right Duke Maddox stood, wary.

Irene Maddox cried, "Duke—his gun!"

There was a blinding flash of flame from the floor and the deafening detonation of a revolver shot. Incredulous surprise twisted the pudgy face in the instant before the match flame gutted out. Then there was the sprawling thud of a falling body in the darkness.

"Don't move, anybody," Jay said coldly. "You're all washed up."

There was no answer in the dark. Outside the noise of the approaching car grew louder. Suddenly there was a strangled, inarticulate cry of rage and despair. Then a tall figure was vaguely silhouetted against the starlight beyond the open door, pushing frantically at the screen. Flame spurted twice from the floor, accompanying the thunder of the revolver shots. The figure clutched helplessly at the screen door and then sagged to the floor.

Almost instantly the cabin was illuminated by a blinding beam of light. Milo Seymour lay motionless in the doorway. For a moment Sharon saw his crumpled body and the strained faces of Irene Maddox and Steve Cresca standing above the fallen gunman from the train. Then the darkness seemed to erupt with men and voices.

THE night air had never been sweeter. It whistled through the open windows of the descending car.

"It's wonderful," she whispered.

Jay murmured, "Mmmm?" and tightened his arm around her.

"I fainted, though," she said in self-accusation.

He chuckled. "You just beat me to it."

Immediately ahead of them, slowly following the police car down the curving highway, was the limousine.

The red-faced detective Jay had called Lowry shifted behind the wheel beside her. "One corpse in that hack coming up. Two in it on the way down."

She shivered. "I thought Milo Seymour was a corpse, too, when that gun went off beside me."

"No such luck," Jay said. "I aimed for the back of his knees. It's painful, but seldom fatal."

The plainclothesman grunted. "You learned a lot in the Philippines."

"How did you know where we were, Mr. Lowry?"

"Ask the boy friend, Miss Carlin."

Jay said, "I called the police after I found Burgess' body. Lowry here wouldn't believe me. He wouldn't take me to the Seymours to get you. But then he left me alone and I ducked downstairs and borrowed his radio car, the one we're in now. When I got to the house, though, you were all gone. I could hear sirens down on Los Feliz just as I found that receipt. I knew we'd never get past arguing about why I'd borrowed the prowl car, so I jumped in it again and then roared down that side lane with all four wheels in the air. It reminded me of my jeep days in the Philippines."

"Yeah, the Philippines," said Lowry. "That was the pay-off. We found that tax receipt on top of the desk. We guessed you were headed this way and came after you."

"I hoped you might when I left it there for you. That's why I kept him talking. Say, what did you mean about the Philippines being the pay-off?"

"You didn't have to take a powder on me, Rogers. I went in the bedroom to tell the boys I was taking you to the Seymours. My kid was killed on Bataan."

Jay said, "Well, it worked out all right, anyway."

"I guess it did. That Maddox dame and Cresca look like the canary type to me, and we'll pick Brady up without any trouble."

Sharon said, "Who really killed Mrs. Seymour?"

"Maddox took care of young Burgess—he and the dame flew back from Frisco. Seymour killed his wife. He'll walk to the gas chamber for it."

"What about Keith? Where did he get all that money? And why should he be locked out of his hotel?"

Lowry said, "He'd hit a lucky streak at the races. We found a couple of pari-mutual tickets in his pockets The hotel had rented his room to someone else because he'd been gone for a month."

"But the bruises on his forehead—"

"It's our guess somebody tried to strong arm him. He was drunk, and he was carrying all that dough around loose in his pocket."

Sharon shivered. "Poor Keith." Then she whispered, "I thought I'd never see you again."

"Not a chance," Jay said. "We had too much unfinished business to take up." His arm drew her closer to him.

"Oh, yes, yes, . . . " Her voice trailed away. "Darling . . . "

Then she was sleeping, her head relaxed against his shoulder, unaware of the touch of his lips, as the caravan continued slowly down the twisting highway.

THE END

BOOKS IN REVIEW

By Helen Greenwood

THE FROTH ESTATE, by **Joseph Mackey,** is a book of reminiscences by the Nut Editor of the New York Sun who has been seeing the zanier people of the city for the past ten years.

Joseph Mackey

After reading the chapter titled Are Children People? one wonders how Mr. Mackey has stood it. "You never know about these child interviews," he writes. "The geniuses occasionally seem mentally deficient, the toughies seem meek, and the model children often kick over the traces."

The writer's favorite child seems to have been Charles (Mickey) Norman, 3rd, who smoked cigars, cigarettes, and a pipe at the age of three. Joseph Mackey covered the story of the smoking child for five years, and by that time even Mickey himself was becoming bored with the notoriety his addiction to the weed had brought.

Mr. Mackey tells of the Miss Subways who never rode on the subways, and of Annie, the Central Park Zoo chimpanzee who was taken to the movies.

The Froth Estate is good, light reading. Mr. Mackey tells some stories on his confreres of the press and insists that "One of the most popular misconceptions about newspapermen is that they all drink. All that can be said about this absurd notion is that for every newspaperman you will find in a bar, you will find possibly ten or twenty outside bars; although, of course, many of these may be on their way to bars."

Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York. Price $2.50.

A. R. SIEDENTOPF'S The Last Stronghold of Big Game is a fascinating and enlightening book by a naturalist who lived for fifteen years in the wild Tanganyika Territory of East Africa.

A. R. Siedentopf

Siedentopf has written about his adventures in the African jungles in a graphic and matter-of-fact way that serves to make his material the more exciting. This is not merely another amateur's story of a single safari—this is a book about wild animals and their habits by a man who really knows and understands them. It is not primarily as a big-game hunter that he writes, but as a naturalist intent on observing behavior of animals. Siedentopf did not hunt for the sake of hunting—he killed only when some wild creature menaced his life or the lives of others.

Robert M. McBride and Company, New York. Price $3.

ALFRED A. KNOPF has reprinted **John Hersey's** great **Hiroshima** story in book form. Here is the account of six people who survived the great atomic bombing of the Japanese city on August 6, 1945—the most tremendous argument for permanent and lasting peace, no matter what the effort, that has ever been written.

Alfred A. Knopf, New York. Price $1.75.

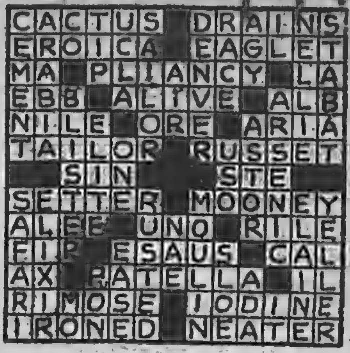
TOM HARMON and the Great Gridiron Plot, by **Jay Dender** is a football yarn for teen-age boys. This is a story packed with accurate football information and colored with a realistic picture of college life.

Whitman Publishing Company, Racine, Wis. Price $.49.

Puzzle 407 1/11/47

COCKEYED CROSSWORD

By Ted Shane



CACTUS DRAINS
EROICA EAGLET
MA PLIANCY LA
EBB ALIVE ALB
NILE ORE ARIA
TAILOR RUSSET
SIN STE
SETTER MOONEY
ALEE UNO RILE
FIP ESAUS CAL
AX PATELLA IL
RIMOSE IODINE
IRONED NEATER

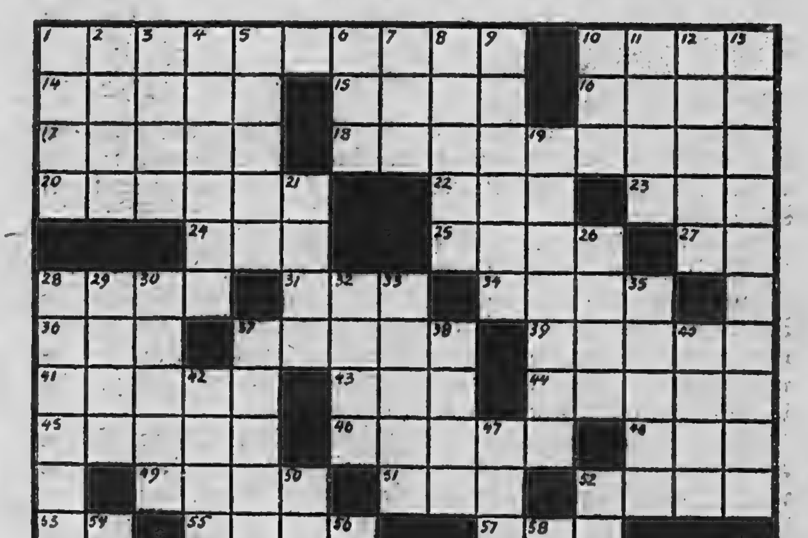
Last week's answer

HORIZONTAL

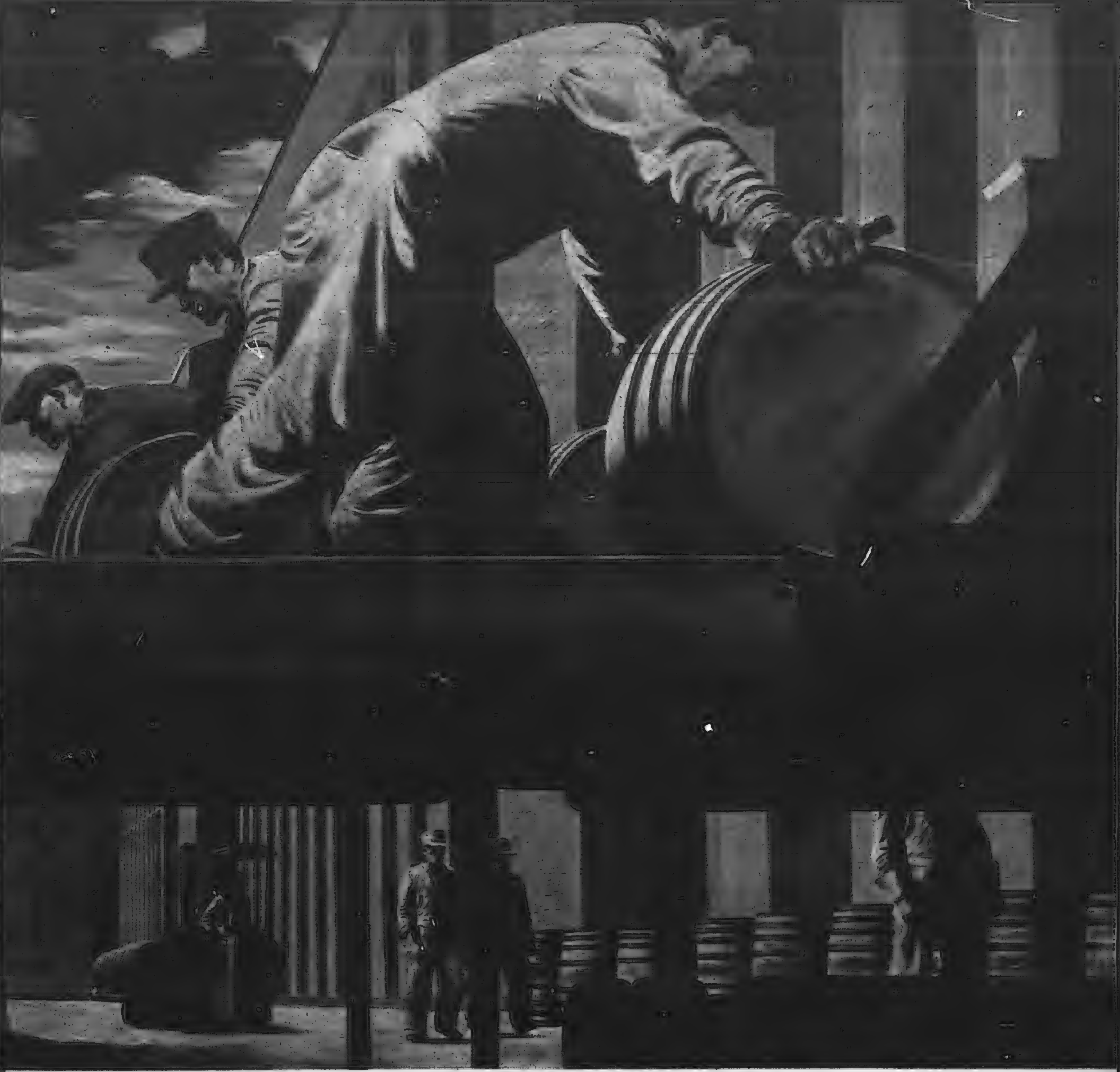
1 Cause of delirium Trumans
10 What each party inherits on taking office; bequeaths on leaving it
14 Bell Hersey played a litry bar on—Hersey bar (Get it?)
15 You can blame it all on this
16 That podrida again
17 Paris underground still in operation
18 She's got a heart of ice; *cf.* "That's —— ——, that's my wife!" (two words)
20 Ye olde royal razzoos
22 This maid's half woman, half sole, *i.e.*, half-soled maid
23 What sitters do on nasty brats
24 Demand
25 It's very tricky to make
27 Nuptial Aberration (abbr.)
28 Only way to soften this tough old bird is to get her thoroughly potted
31 Sexy little determinants
34 Twin-manufacturing country
36 Miss Clare
37 Precipitates frozen felines and pooches
39 Broadway, when it wasn't broad
41 Liberty's big condensed dime's worth
43 What every billionaire wants to do more
44 Reason she changed color to the roots of her hair
45 *Retag* this star (anag.)
46 Tito would make this of these
48 Peekaboo, ——! (abbr.)
49 Put umbrellas aside for a rainy day
51 Caustic, isn't it? Untruthful, too!
52 Bestows the royal razzoo
53 Rainy-day plane (abbr.)
55 Hoov'
57 Yatata-yatata beverage
59 A standout on little girls
61 Kanga's last name
62 Beast with a scented tail, or a California town
66 Forgotten items
70 The Japs sank it, then they got sunk
71 The bluenoses want them to dry up
72 Neroski
73 Related on your mama's side
74 Red entry
75 Spinning Jinneys, or the crates of yesteryear

VERTICAL

1 Butters
2 Temporary housing project
3 Wig chassis
4 It ain't so
5 Uncouths
6 Eternal questions
7 Iron pants for a sardine
8 Cause of the world's splitting headache (pl.)
9 Posts
10 What a lot of old cows do when it's in the bag
11 Biggest shade manufacturers in the country
12 Rubbed out violently
13 He believes in the law of supply and demand: You demand, he supplies (two words)
19 Pholks that've turned phoggy
21 It holds men and women together
26 Mrs. Hosspuss
28 Only post-season football game they don't play
29 This'll make a hit in smellevision
30 Tarettes
32 Friends of Lassie
33 Grandma once said Scrumptious; she now says this
35 This'll drive you nuts
37 Human cargo ships
38 What guests do after midnight—darn it!
40 Worm this long: ________
42 Hate backward
47 What Truman can learn to do from Molotov
50 Beethoven's Third
52 Pear with its girdle on
54 Gent Mussolini swiped the balcony idea from
56 Cheer juice
58 Boot out
60 When they come in half sizes, they aren't considered smart
63 Article in double talk
64 Electric charge
65 They change pinks into violent reds
67 Curvaceous sibilants
68 Normalcy's Around, Republicans! (I hope!) (abbr.)
69 Seats Remain Onobtainable (abbr.)



The answer to this puzzle will appear in next week's issue.



"Whiskey Going to the Rackhouse to Age"—painted at the distillery by the famous artist, Fred Ludekens

89 years at fine whiskey-making makes this whiskey good

IMPERIAL

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Hiram Walker's Blended Whiskey

HIRAM WALKER
IMPERIAL
Hiram Walker's Blended Whiskey

86 proof. The straight whiskies in this product are 4 years or more old. 30% straight whiskey. 70% grain neutral spirits. Hiram Walker & Sons Inc., Peoria, Ill.

Nocturne Creole

RESUMÉ OF PART ONE

IT was Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Maryse Ducros, former dancer in a Manhattan night club, and Hank Smith, just back from overseas, had been married for two hours and were in the midst of a devastating quarrel, all because of Pierre, a French youth who had known Maryse in New York. He had recognized her in the Larabie café to which Hank had taken her after the wedding, and promptly asked her to dance. Hank, jealous, had struck him and left with Maryse. The quarrel continued in their hotel room and reached a climax when Hank slapped his bride. Maryse, disillusioned, fled into the city's jostling, celebrating crowds.

Orphaned at fifteen, Maryse had built up a romantic picture of New Orleans from the tales told by her gentle Creole mother, who had eloped from the home of her Uncle Rivé de Rivière. Bewildered in the maze of strange streets, Maryse opened the locket where she kept that old address, 222½ Esplanade. If any of her mother's relatives still lived there, she might find shelter. A friendly policeman looked dubious as he directed her to the ancient house. She rang, and an old wrinkled woman opened the door. "Maryse?" she questioned. "Come in. We knew you would come back."

PART TWO—CONCLUSION

NUMBLY Maryse followed Mme. de Rivière twenty feet, twenty years—a hundred years. The house was airless and smelled of tallow and burnt kerosene. The second door off the hallway she opened. This was the informal parlor. It contained a fireplace faced in marble, and an altar. It contained, further, Rivé de Rivière.

He rose and inclined his head in the slightest possible bow.

"*Vous êtes arrivèe.* We were certain that your senses would return, Maryse. Still, you have courted dishonor for the house. There must be no more *folie.*"

Maryse gaped at her great-uncle while her Aunt Cécile, with a voluminous rustle of satin, seated herself primly on a forbidding chair and folded her wisps of hands. Rivé de Rivière wore a tight-fitting coat, swallow-tailed, of some pale yellowish cloth; there were ruffles at the throat above his piped waistcoat. He was a wraith of a man, incredibly old, but ramrod-erect.

"What," demanded Aunt Cécile, "did you do with that no-good, Paul? That one of the *gens du commun!*"

"Paul?" Maryse gulped, groping for the meaning to this wild charade. But she knew instinctively that for these people, it was in earnest. Paul had been her father's name. And she was named Maryse for her mother.

"You see?" Rivé de Rivière gestured with a finger. "She has repudiated and forgotten the rascal already. I doubted all along that she would get as far as the stage terminal on this mad venture." His thin voice carried a crisp authority. His tone grew tender. "But have no fear, *petite.* Your moment of madness will be sacredly kept *en famille.*"

Now came the even more fragile tones of Aunt Cécile!

"Dear child, you are *fatiguée.* I shall fetch you coffee."

She rose and pattered across the straw matting on the floor, a sound like mice running. She disappeared.

De Rivière bowed slightly.

"Excellent," he piped and indicated a chair to Maryse.

She realized that he stood because she stood. Inexplicably, she was happy; she was home.

Now Aunt Cécile came pattering back, a candle aloft in one hand, a tiny tray bearing three cups and saucers in the other. She passed the tray first and properly to the head of the house, then to Maryse.

Maryse drank, and the sip, black, hot, was reviving to her spirit.

"Did you come alone from the stage terminal?" Cécile inquired. "We will never speak of it that you, an unmarried girl, were out alone at night."

Rivé de Rivière nodded as he sipped his coffee. "And *les sauvages* everywhere. These Americans from the north are the curse of New Orleans. They are not above rudely brushing a lady as they pass on the *banquette.* I have heard such tales in the coffee house."

Maryse remembered with difficulty that these people were in the grip of a fantastic illusion. The atmosphere of courtesy, kindness, love, laved her bruises. And they were her people: Creoles. Defiantly she wanted to defend and justify them in their gentle lunacy, slip back with them into the yesterday they had caught and held, refusing to die, refusing to turn the pages of the calendar. She began to comprehend the whole curious story.

Her mother, orphaned, had been raised by these relatives. Now young Maryse could re-create the stormy scene twenty years ago when her mother had insisted on marrying one Paul Ducros. For some reason Paul had been "unsuitable," but on that long-ago night a fiery girl had rushed out to meet her love. And Mme. and M'sieu de Rivière had waited in panic hope for the girl to reconsider the shame she was about to bring upon the house, change her mad design, and return home. She had not come. So they had, as it were, stopped the clocks. And, as they knew all along she would, Maryse had returned.

Maryse said, "I'm so glad to be home!"

Cécile clucked placidly. "My little sparrow. All now is well. We were afraid you would not return before bedtime."

UNCLE RIVÉ'S remote pleasant voice strummed.

"Now, little one, I take it various things are understood. *Alors,* you will obey dutifully. You will accept, like a good Creole daughter, the husband we have chosen for you."

"The husband?"

"But of course. Arnaud has been very patient. A Blanchissard—there is no better Creole name in French territory—need not fret himself with the whims of a willful girl. Pardon, my dear, but it is so. He is coming later in the evening. Your behavior has been so headstrong he has hesitated to discuss the marriage contract."

Aunt Cécile looked at her folded hands. "*Curieux!* I had a dream in which I saw Arnaud Blanchissard dead."

"Tut! You are always having dreams. But I do not like the dream of death. It is bad with a marriage approaching. However, Arnaud will be here any moment and we will draw up the terms." A note of pride swelled the reed of voice. "Our little Maryse will not go to her husband empty-handed."

Maryse was oddly drawn toward accepting this quiet talk at face value. This was truth. This was reality. There was no Hank Smith. Time was a dream and in a little while her true and fated fiancé, Ar-

(*Continued on page 54*)

"Turn off that light this second," said Maryse. "Haven't you caused me *enough* trouble for one night?"

This ancient house whose inhabitants lived in the long dead past was like a dream to Maryse. And when she thought of Hank, it became a nightmare

ILLUSTRATED BY ERNEST CHIRIACKA

BY JAMES ASWELL

The Camera Eye

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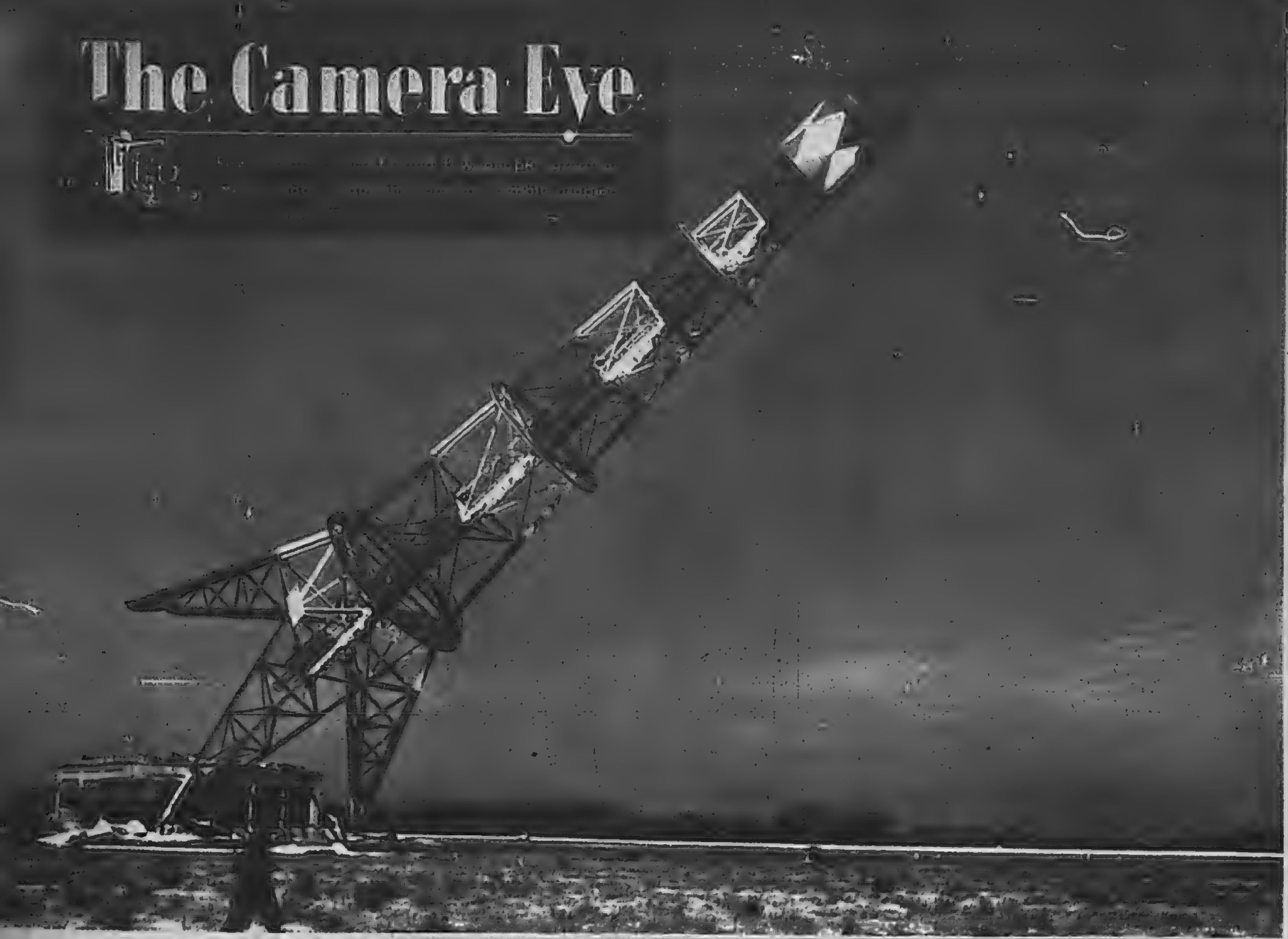


$250,000 GOING DOWN—Henry Ford built this mooring mast 22 years ago when he thought dirigibles would replace planes. The mast was used once.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTO

ALL LEGS—but not much support for this newborn camel in Australia. Little Susan Ramp looks as if she might be gently trying to push him over.

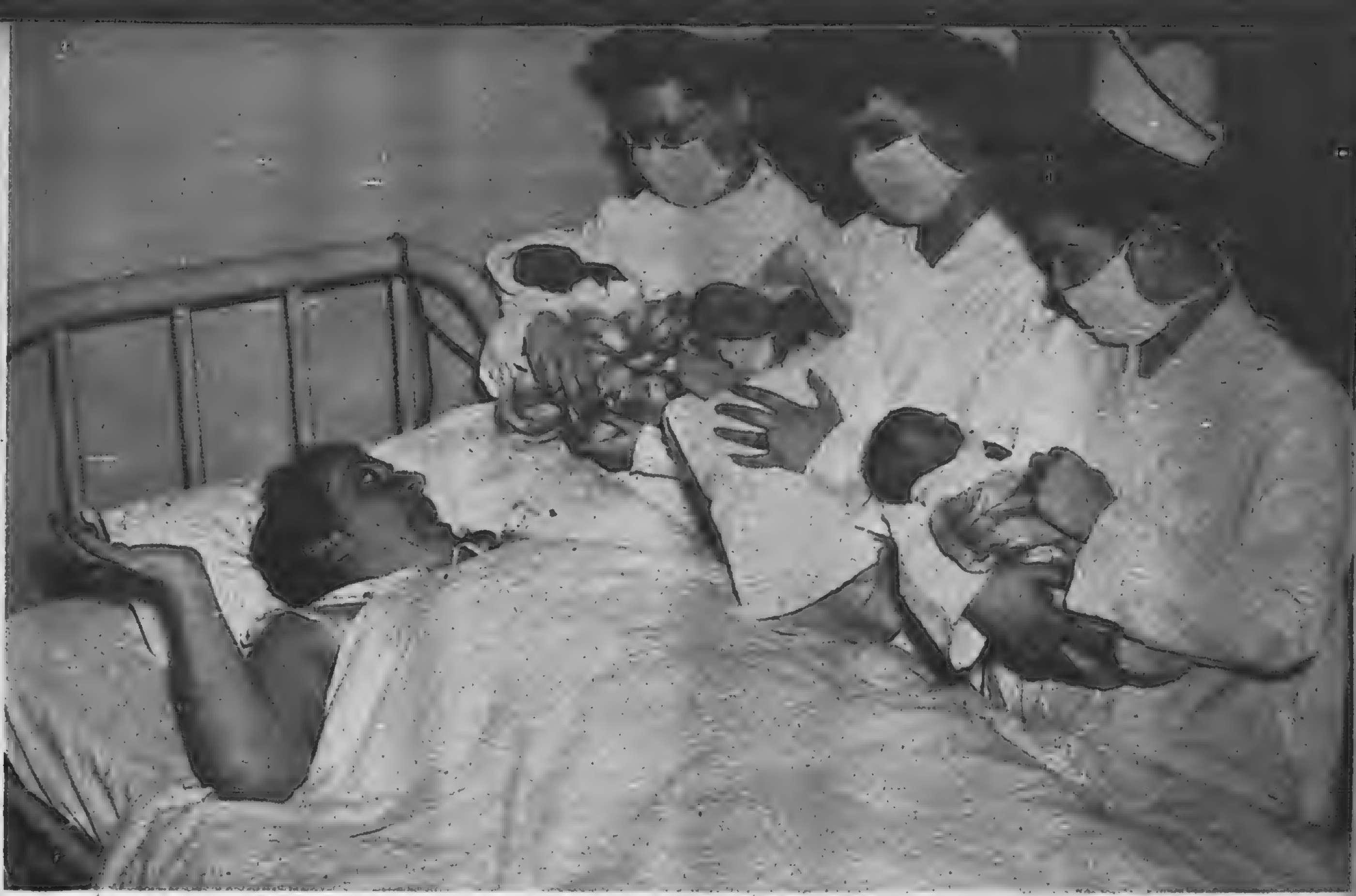
WIDE WORLD PHOTO

VERSATILE—This one-man orchestra is a familiar sight in Paris' famous Flea Market. The maestro has trouble bending to pick up pennies.

ACME PHOTO

WINTER SHADOWS—Shooting toward the sun, a lucky photographer caught this graceful picture of a young figure skater on a rough bit of ice.

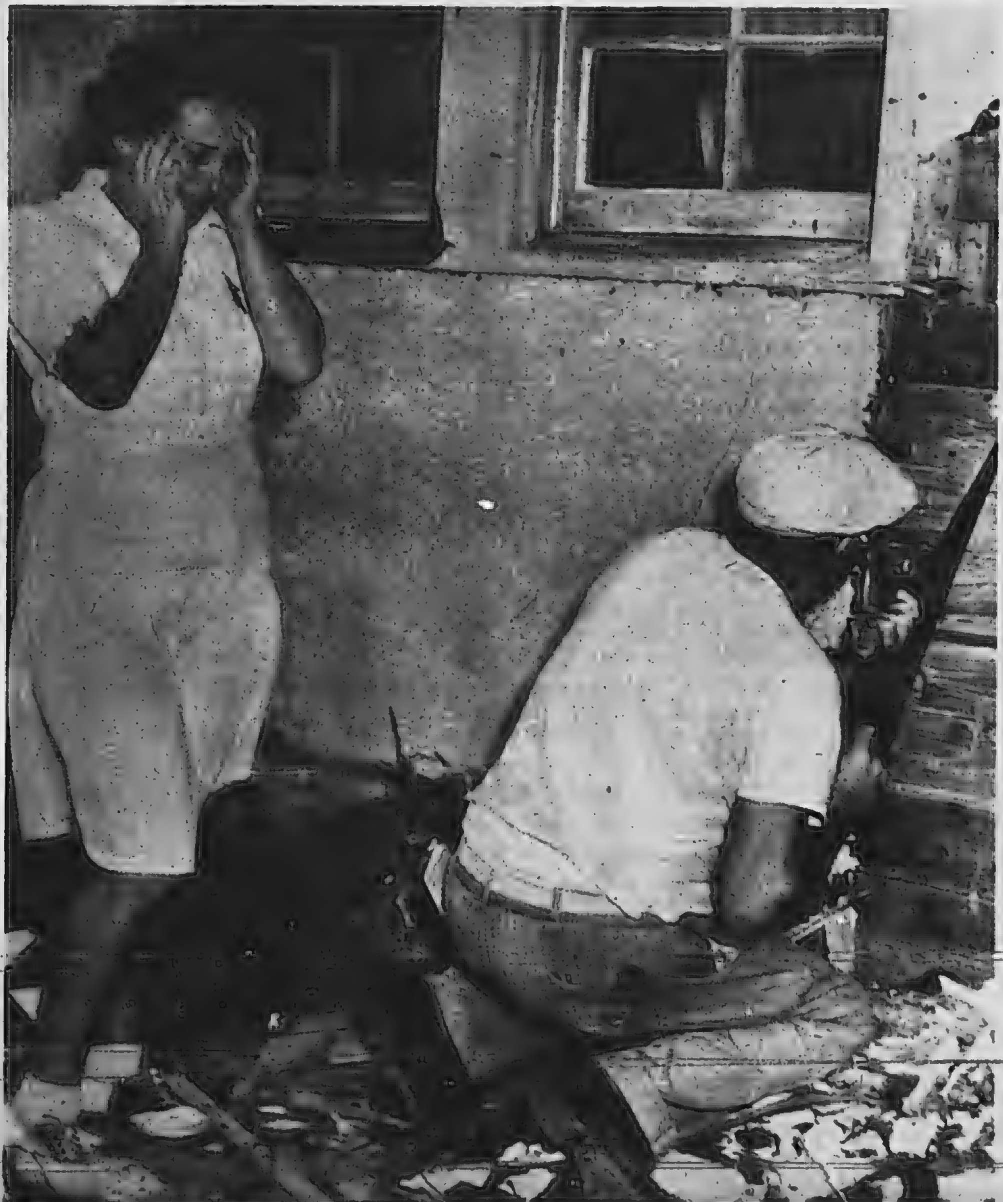
RAPHO-GUILLUMETTE PHOTO

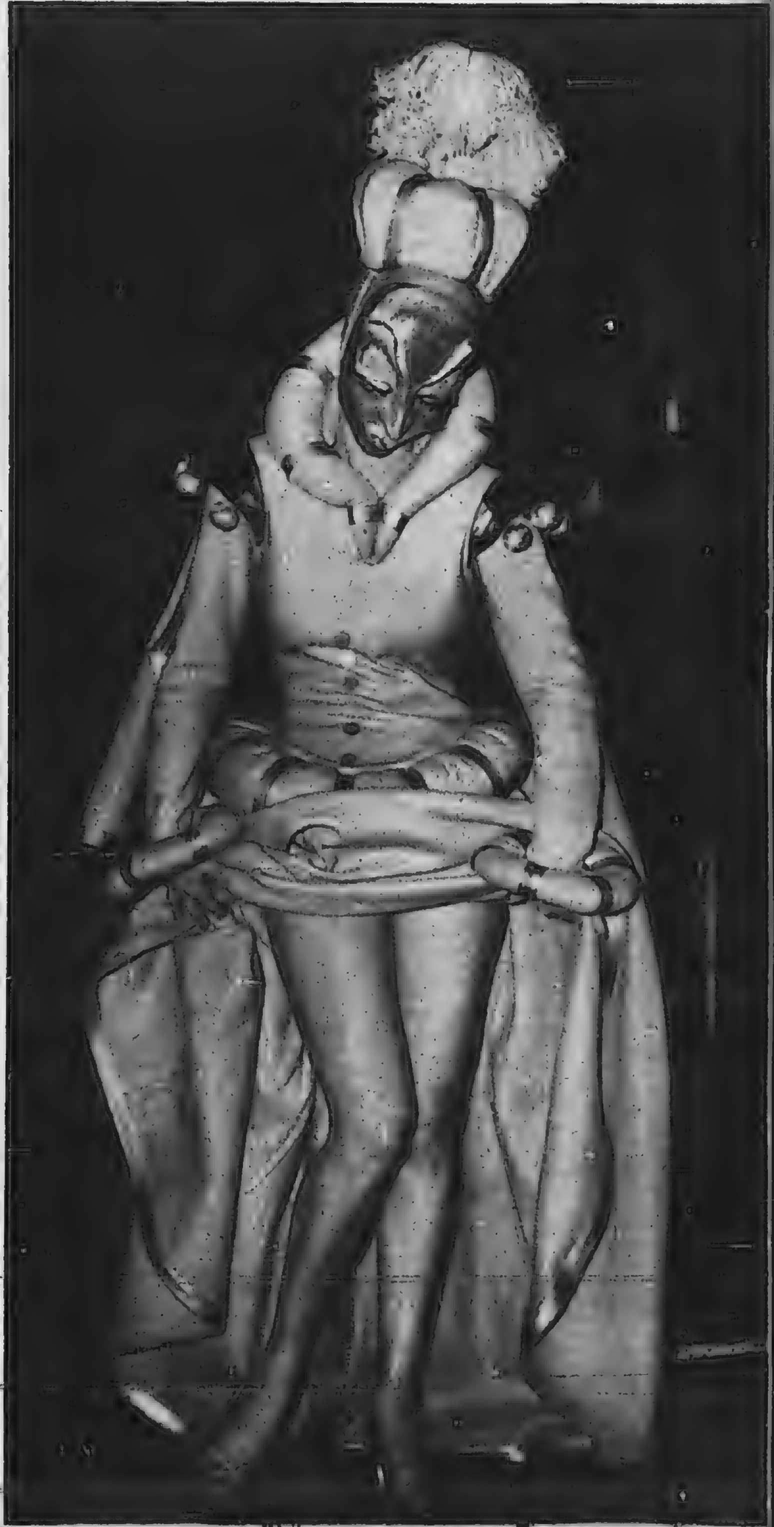


THREE OF A KIND—Mrs. Kornhaber hardly expected triplets when she went to the hospital.
N. Y. DAILY NEWS

SAVING FACE—This London lass would not unmask, but pleasantly revealed her lovely limbs.
INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTO ➧

MISTAKE—Part of house is being sawed off because owner (crying) built beyond her own line.
ACME PHOTO





"That horse just never learns!"

LIBERTY

F.D.R.'S BIGGEST FIGHT

Continued from Page 11

worse, no matter how hard he tried to kid himself. His legs were utterly useless now, and the paralysis crept upward. His neck became stiff and his arms showed loss of control. Worst of all, his bladder became paralyzed, and relieving it artificially was an acutely painful process several times a day. Always there was pain, deep in his back and legs, like a toothache through his whole body; and his muscles were like raw exposed nerves, so that the slightest touch was anguish.

The children came back from camp, but Eleanor dared not let them see Pops.

THOUGH he seemed to be quite literally dying by inches, Franklin did not lose his nerve. He refused to allow anyone to send word to his mother, who was in Europe; but he did let Eleanor telephone his uncle, Frederic Delano.

"Get Lovett," said Uncle Fred. "He's the best man in the country—Robert S. Lovett. He's in Newport."

Dr. Lovett was, in fact, the leading polio specialist of the world. He gave up his vacation to come to Campobello. As he made his examination, his face was grim. Franklin, anxiously watching, knew the verdict even before it was pronounced.

"Let's have it," he said.

"It's undoubtedly polio," Dr. Lovett asserted.

Franklin had braced himself for the shock and even managed a smile.

"I thought so," he said.

"What about the children?" Eleanor asked in a sudden panic.

"If they haven't shown signs of it by now, they probably won't get it," Dr. Lovett said calmly. "We don't know much about this thing; it strikes mysteriously. I always change my clothes before I see my grandchildren, but I doubt if it makes any difference."

"I'm glad the children seem to have escaped," Franklin said. "What are my chances?"

"You probably won't die," the doctor answered, "though it's a miracle your lungs are not affected. It's impossible to say if you'll get well."

"You can't tell me a child's disease can lick a grown man," Franklin said. "I'll beat this thing."

That was big talk, but Franklin knew it was easier to keep your nerve if you kept talking. Easier with strangers like Dr. Lovett than with Eleanor and Louis. Hardest of all when you were alone. But if you lost your nerve you were through; the thing would get you down and you'd never come up again. If you let imagination play with the smiling active world that was beyond the impenetrable window of your room, that would sink you in self-pity. You couldn't stop thinking, of course; impossible to turn off the mind like one of those new radios. But you could direct it. There were a lot of things to think about besides yourself, and they were really more interesting. There was all of history and the things that might be learned from it; politics, too, and the technique of the masters of that craft. There were people, all those people in the world who were insecure, ill-nourished and ill-clad, cheated by circumstances or the stupidity and cupidity of men out of their birthright. If such things *had* to be, you might accept it and offer such palliatives as you could. But they weren't inevitable, and that made them an outrage against humanity.

Thinking hard about these things, to avoid thinking about himself, Franklin saw that the trouble was that technical progress in science and industry had so far outstripped progress in the fields of economics and government. They must catch up; man must learn how to use the beautiful intricate tools he had invented. It was not a thing that could be done in a moment; scientific progress was the result of infinite, painstaking research. The new technique of government must be learned in the same way. That was where he could turn to account these wasted days, he could at least make a start on the long road to mastery of that necessary new technique. And the way to learn was by analyzing the old mistakes. He sent for books, had Louis comb the libraries of his friends in Campobello.

SO, while he lay in that hiatus of uncertainty, Franklin still had a sense of going forward. When this thing had passed, he would be better fitted for the role he proposed to play. He never admitted, even to himself, that he might never be able to enter the political arena again; he would not admit it, even though he often had to slam the door of his mind in the face of doubt. He read until his eyes were sore, damning the aches that would distract his mind; and Louis read aloud until he lost his voice. . . .

From the day of Louis Howe's arrival at Campobello, he went to work to keep this misfortune from becoming a catastrophe. First came the matter of the press: the delicate question of how Roosevelt's illness should be presented to the public. The island and Eastport, Maine, across the bay, were seething with rumors. Reporters were inquiring. Something had to be done fast.

Louis sent out reports that Roosevelt had a heavy cold, was threatened with pneumonia.

"Why not the truth?" asked Eleanor.

"Because," Louis explained, "the word paralysis has dire implications. There might be confusion in the public thought with meningitis; intimations that Franklin's mind had been affected. It is something that he will have to fight for the rest of his life; but we can hold it to a minimum now. We must not let the public hear that word 'paralysis' until they can see him sane and smiling, as he is. It would be easy to create an impression that would wreck his political career."

"Do you think he still has one?" Eleanor asked.

Louis answered with the fervor of an early Christian affirming his faith: "I believe he will be President."

PURSUING his policy of taking no chances of a leak, Louis went down into New York to meet Mrs. James Roosevelt at the dock and tell her of Franklin's illness. She hurried with him back to Campo in an agony of anxiety. But Sallie, too, knew how to keep her nerve. When she stood at the foot of Franklin's bed, she said, "Well, son, this is a fine way to greet me!"

Franklin grinned at her. "I'd rather have been at the steamer myself," he answered.

Early in September he showed considerable improvement, and was impatient to get where he could begin a cure. Moving him to New York without causing the papers to break out in a rash of unfavorable publicity was a pretty problem. Louis worked it out brilliantly. Uncle Fred Delano sent a private car to Eastport, and Louis let it be known that Franklin would cross from the island on the morning of September 14. Reporters and townsfolk gathered at the dock.

That day Roosevelt was carried on an improvised stretcher down the steep, slippery path to where Captain Calder waited in his motorboat. They laid him on the floorboards, bilge water sloshing within a few inches of his head and gas fumes blowing in his face. By twisting his neck, Franklin got one last look at his house on the bluff, then lay quiet, garnering his strength while the boat chugged across Passamaquoddy Bay.

HAVING lured the curious to the town dock, Louis arranged for their motorboat to land on the opposite side of the harbor. Roosevelt was loaded on a luggage dray and the others walked beside it to the siding where the private car was waiting. When Franklin was safely aboard it, Louis sent word to the dock. The reporters and townspeople saw Roosevelt propped up in bed by the open window of the car, smoking a cigarette in a long holder. He smiled at them and waved as the train pulled slowly out.

Early the next morning it rolled into the gloom of the Grand Central Station. After the passengers were gone, Louis had the platform cleared and Franklin's stretcher was eased through a window of the car. Dr. George Draper was waiting to greet his new patient.

"Hyya, Dan!" Franklin shouted, using the nickname he had called Draper in Groton and Harvard days. "I'm glad you're going to take care of me."

"We'll do our best, Franklin," said Dr. Draper.

There were more examinations at the Presbyterian Hospital before the ultimate verdict was delivered by Drs. Lovett and Draper. They did not quibble about the damage to nerves and muscles of both legs and hips. But they did not tell him everything. Draper feared that the great muscles of the back were also gone, that Franklin might never be able even to sit up.

"The psychological factor in his management is paramount," Dr. Draper wrote his colleague. "He has such courage, such ambition, and yet at the same time such an extraordinarily sensitive emotional mechanism, that it will take all the skill which we can muster to lead him successfully to a recognition of what he really faces without utterly crushing him."

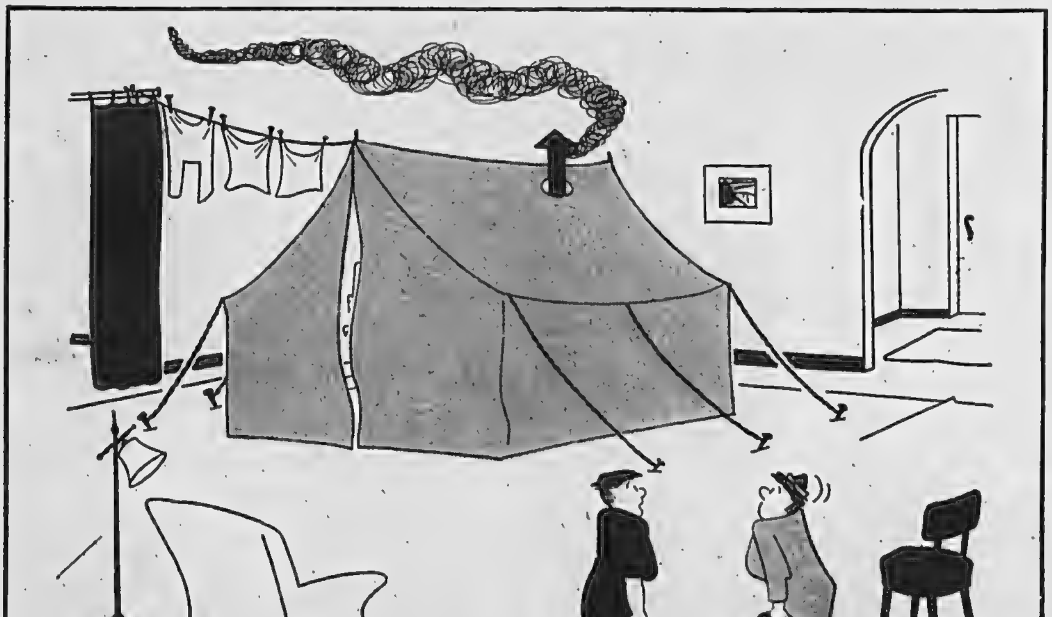
What they told him was bad enough. Franklin realized that for the immediate future his legs were totally paralyzed.

"Can people ever get the use of their limbs back?" he asked. "Does anything do any good?"

"The only thing that can help now," said Dr. Lovett, "is a grueling regiment of exercise. It means a struggle maintained daily and hourly, and only in the rarest cases has the patient energy to maintain it."

"All right," Franklin said. "When does the cure start?"

Part Two of this series will appear in Liberty next week.



"Although our daughter and her husband are living with us, they've managed to maintain a home of their own."

LIBERTY

BOMBS FROM THE BLUE

Continued from Page 17

Almost all other meteorites are of a soft, pumice-like rock which disintegrates rather easily in flight, so that such meteorites "explode" in the air. They melt rather easily into the soil, too, so that if not found within a very few years after they have fallen, they are gone for good.

When cut and polished, the nickel-iron meteorites reveal a strange latticework in their interiors, like cross sections of huge crystals. That is what they are—crystals of metal. The prevailing opinion is that they mean the metals cooled from the molten state over a very long time.

SOME other facts about meteorites: When a huge one hits our atmosphere, its electric potential differs greatly from that of the atmosphere and results in a huge hissing discharge. Hair stands on end; kitchen utensils, and even a house itself, may hiss and rattle. Then come the flash and devastating roar. Not even an earthquake can rival for sheer terror the moment of a really huge meteorite's arrival.

Repeated analysis of dust found high in the atmosphere has disclosed that it contains nickel. This is proof that the greater part of meteorites disintegrates into a dust so fine it may float in the atmosphere for years, thus giving us our fine sunsets, our rains, and the deep blue of the sky.

One would think the earth would by now be deep in dust from space. However, meteorites are so small on the average that the whole mass of them falling yearly on earth averages not much more than the weight of a modern battleship, infinitesimal beside the mass of the planet or even that of its atmosphere. The meteoritic deposit during the whole of historical time works out to a surface layer of less than an inch.

Some meteoricists have sought to prove the hypothesis that meteorites may carry life—reflecting the theory of the great Swede, Svante Arrhenius, that human life might have reached earth from beyond the barriers of space.

Experiments have been inconclusive. From the dust of some meteorites, which were supposedly thoroughly surface-sterilized before they were ground up, have been grown bacterial cultures, but these were always of earthly bacterial types. From other meteoritic materials treated in the same way, no life has appeared.

But meteorites are of enormous potential importance to the future of our race, as well as a possible source of trouble when and if we go zooming to the moon and other planets. Maybe avoiding collisions with "shooting stars" will be as big a headache to space-ship pilots as storms are to today's flyers.

THE END

Pick of THE PICTURES

BY VIRGINIA SPIES

The Yearling

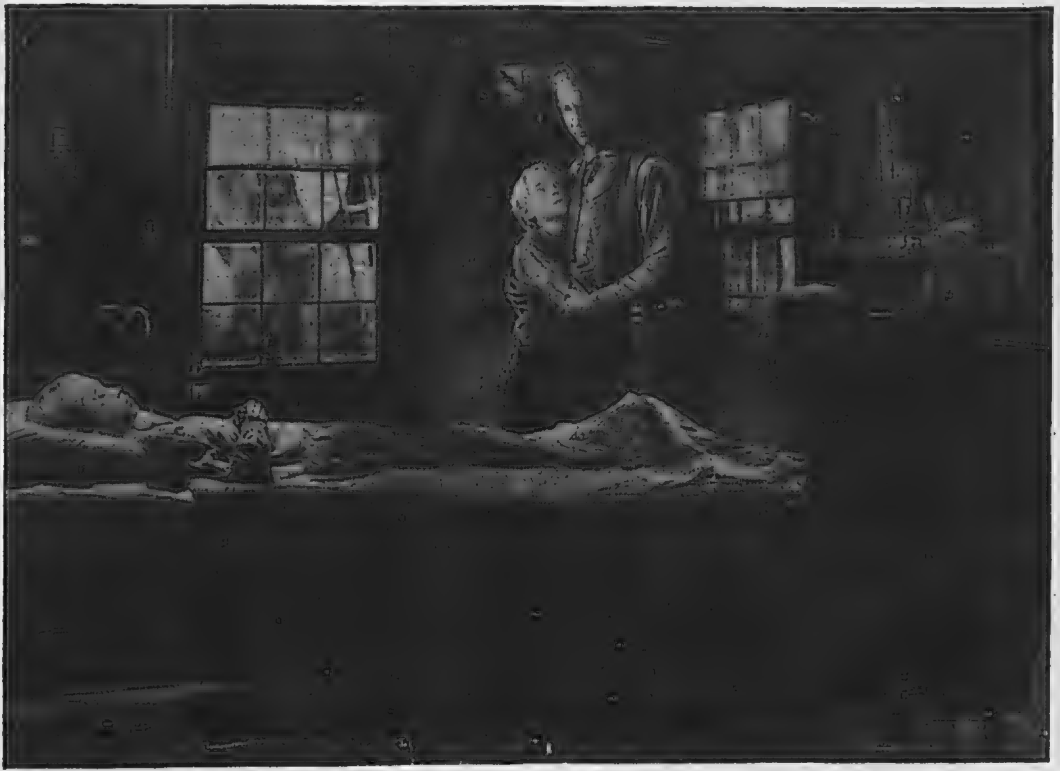
THE YEARLING is a magnificent movie. Lifted with care from Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Pulitzer Prize novel of a Florida farm boy's love for his pet deer, it tells an earthy story with simple, inspiring grandeur. Gregory Peck and Jane Wyman as the pioneering parents turn in tremendous performances, and eleven-year-old Claude Jarman is perfect as the boy. The film, produced by Sidney Franklin and directed by Clarence Brown, also hits a high Hollywood watermark for Technicolor nature shots—particularly with its animal close-ups.

Metro's inspiring tale of Florida farmers stars Gregory Peck, Jane Wyman, and a remarkable newcomer, eleven-year-old Claude Jarman.

Jody (Claude), wanting something to call his own, adopts a wonderfully photogenic fawn, but Ma disapproves of the pet.

Pa and Jody go bear hunting. Deft photography and striking Technicolor account for unusually realistic animal scenes.

Hard-working Pa sometimes takes time out from farming to come to town to defend a friend (above) or to buy his wilderness-weary wife black alpaca for a new dress.



Part of Jody's growing-up consists of learning about death. Here, in one of The Yearling's most touching moments, he weeps over the body of a little crippled pal.

OTHER PICTURES WORTH SEEING

THE RAZOR'S EDGE (20th Century-Fox). Tyrone Power searches for his soul while Gene Tierney sulks in this elaborate version of Maugham's novel.
MAGNIFICENT DOLL (Universal). Love and politics in early America, with Ginger Rogers, David Niven, and Burgess Meredith taking part.
UNDERCURRENT (M-G-M). Here's a sleek and suspenseful picture which brings Katharine Hepburn and Robert Taylor back to the screen after long absences.
SONG OF THE SOUTH (Disney). A merry re-creation of the Uncle Remus stories with cute kids, catchy tunes, and ingenious additions to Disney's menagerie.
HUMORESQUE (Warner Bros.). A polished and provocative movie which features fine acting by Joan Crawford, John Garfield, and Oscar Levant.
THE STRANGE WOMAN (United Artists). Ben Ames Williams' popular novel has been adapted into a costume piece, starring Hedy Lamarr.
DECEPTION (Warner Bros.). Bette Davis and Claude Rains vie for acting honors in an engrossing backstage drama of musical artists.
THE DARK MIRROR (International). This is an absorbing supercharged thriller, Olivia De Havilland excelling at playing twins.
THE JOLSON STORY (Columbia). A schmaltzy, spirited and unforgettable tribute to one of our greatest entertainers, with Larry Parks playing Jolson.

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NEGLECTED—A POWERFUL WEAPON AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

Continued from Page 26

in 1930, doctors gave what they thought was BCG to some 250 infants. Within a few months seventy-three of these babies had died.

Subsequent investigations proved that BCG itself was not to blame at all. Some careless physician or nurse had contaminated the culture with the highly virulent Keil strain of tuberculosis. After all the evidence was in, the medical world knew that BCG was innocent of these deaths. Despite the millions of other inoculations which have since been administered, not one death has ever been ascribed to BCG; not one single similar accident has ever occurred.

But the evidence came in too late. American physicians shied away from the new inoculation in shocked horror. Some cited the Lübeck accident as reason enough. Others still avoided its use on the ground that its value had never been proved by a controlled scientific experiment.

Here they were on sounder ground, for the European physicians had not measured the effectiveness of BCG by carefully following up a large group of exposed persons through the years. They had given BCG to everyone they could persuade to take it, instead of giving it to some and denying it to others equally exposed to t.b. infection.

IN this country a few bold minds worked on BCG—Dr. William H. Park of the Health Department of New York City, Dr. John Overton, Health Officer of Nashville, Tennessee, Dr. S. R. Rosenthal of Chicago, and a handful of others.

But when they published their results, there were always those who raised countless objections to the experiments. "Controls were not complete enough," they chorused. "The period of observation was too short." This detail or that "had not been satisfactorily studied."

The all-essential "perfect" experiment was not initiated for fourteen wasted years. In 1935, Dr. Joseph D. Aronson of the Henry Phipps Institute of the University of Pennsylvania got the chance he had sought for years. With the cooperation and support of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Public Health Service, Aronson was allowed to conduct an eight-year test among more than 3,000 Indians in four tuberculosis-ridden reservations in the West, and in five equally tubercular Indian villages in Alaska.

He started at the Pima reservation in Arizona in 1935, calling Indian children and those up to twenty years of age to the schoolhouses and testing them for t.b. All those who showed signs of infection were eliminated. The rest bared their arms and received a single injection.

For four years Aronson and his team traveled through the reservations—from Pima to the Wind River Agency in Wyoming, then on to Turtle Mountain, North Dakota, to the Rosebud Indians in South Dakota, and finally to five isolated Indian fishing villages in Alaska. When they had finished their trek, they had inoculated 1,550 Indians with BCG—babies in arms, children, and young men and women up to twenty. There were 1,457 other Indians, also free of t.b., who thought they, too, had been inoculated. But they had really been injected with nothing but a salt solution.

Here, at last, was the true material for a rigidly controlled experiment. Both groups of Indians lived together, in the same squalid huts. Both groups were equally exposed to t.b. If BCG was ineffective, both groups should develop t.b. in equal numbers.

But Aronson and his helpers were not satisfied with the "seemingly perfect" control they had set up. As they revisited each reservation year after year, they compiled tables of ages to make sure that the age distribution of their BCG group did not differ significantly from that of the control group. They carefully tabulated their "strays"—those who died from other causes or left the reservations. The figures proved that "straying" was equal for both groups. They questioned whether their work might not possibly be distorted by some difference in exposure to t.b. Once again laborious checking proved that the BCG group and the control group were almost equally exposed.

BCG did not prove to be a perfect, universal preventive. But after all the records were in, only 40 of the 1,550 vaccinated Indians had developed any tuberculosis at all. Meanwhile the disease had attacked 185 of the control of 1,457.

The figures on deaths directly traceable to tuberculosis itself were even more striking. Among the control groups there were 28 tuberculosis deaths; among the vaccinated there were only four!

Aronson's field studies were terminated by the war. But at the National Health Institute in Washington, his associates continued to analyze and tabulate the precious records of their work. The end result was published last June, in Public Health Reports, a musty little government weekly.

ALMOST simultaneously word came from Canada of two similar experiments with BCG which had been going for years. Before the Buffalo Congress of the National Tuberculosis Association, Dr. R. G. Ferguson, general superintendent of the Saskatchewan Anti-Tuberculosis League, reported on a five-year experiment with BCG. Dr. Ferguson worked with groups of nurses employed at hospitals and tuberculosis sanatoriums, young women from twenty to twenty-five who every day exposed themselves to infection from the patients. All of them had been free of tuberculosis when first employed.

Here also they were divided into two groups. The unvaccinated nurses developed four times as many cases of tuberculosis as did the vaccinated group.

Equally revealing were reports of the work of Dr. Joseph A. Baudouin of the Department of Public Health of Montreal. Dr. Baudouin's group consisted of children living in constant contact with positive-sputum tuberculosis cases in slum districts. Dr. Baudouin started as far back as 1926—inoculating children selected at random, and leaving others in the same tuberculosis families uninoculated to serve as controls. Through the years he watched his charges. And now at last his figures served to confirm the hopes of Park and Overton and Rosenthal, and the data of Aronson and Ferguson. Deaths among Baudouin's vaccinated infants in the first year of life totaled only 6.2 per thousand. The unvaccinated controls showed a death rate of 18.4 per thousand—almost three times as high.

Deaths among all of Baudouin's vaccinated children—over the years—reached a total of 18.7 per thousand. The unvaccinated group had a death rate of 47.4 per thousand. Every year and for every age group the vaccinated among Baudouin's patients have fared far better than the unvaccinated.

In tuberculosis infections the vaccinated group has shown up to particular advantage. During all the years of Baudouin's experiment, those protected by BCG showed an accumulated rate of 135 per thou-

"Well, where did you expect me to put it, Mr. Morning Paper?"

LIBERTY

sand. Meanwhile the unvaccinated showed a rate of 237 per thousand.

The reports of these three experiments should scotch forever the dubious argument that "BCG's value has not been adequately demonstrated." The tragedy, for the tubercular and for many tens of thousands who will yet develop the disease, lies in the fact that the proof finally given us in 1946 might have been in our hands fully fifteen years ago. An even greater tragedy will result if those who control our work against tuberculosis fail now to utilize BCG to full advantage.

This doesn't mean that BCG is to be hailed as a "wonder drug." Men like Dr. Kendall Emerson of the National Tuberculosis Association are the first to point out its limitations. "It is no cure-all—in fact, it cannot cure. It is not even a perfect preventive. But wherever exposure to tuberculosis infection is high—among nurses, physicians, and hospital attendants, among our Indians and the Spanish-speaking citizens of our southwestern states, among the Negroes, and among the inhabitants of the crowded slums of our larger and older cities—there BCG may be able to provide substantial protection."

FORTUNATELY, the flood of reports coming out of Europe since the war, and particularly the overwhelming conclusiveness of Aronson's work among the Indians, seem to have broken the dike of neglect and indifference which so long kept BCG from mass trial in America. On September 7, 1946, the U. S. Public Health Service convened a conference of leading t.b. experts who reviewed Aronson's experiments and the work in foreign countries and came forth with a series of far-reaching recommendations. If these are carried through, a central laboratory will be set up by the Public Health Service to produce BCG vaccine for the entire country for free distribution to research projects. Special "mass experiments" will be carried out among Indians, the employees and inmates of mental institutions, medical students and nurses, and other groups that are highly exposed to t.b. infection. And a special study is projected for a community of at least 100,000 people in which everyone would receive the inoculation.

Thus America may once again turn downward the line which measures the annual death rate from tuberculosis. For, despite our splendid sanatoriums, despite all the efforts of our anti-tuberculosis societies, despite generations of tuberculosis education, our t.b. rate has not been falling significantly in recent years. Our new case rate has actually risen by 17 per cent. Now—with an old weapon newly proved of great value—the attack can go on, and tens of thousands of lives that would otherwise be ruined may be saved.

THE END

DOES A BEAUTIFUL GIRL
Suffer more like this
THAN A HOMELY ONE?

Nature has endowed some women with remarkable beauty of face and form—with sweet, loving dispositions. Others—she may have slighted when it came to passing out gifts of charm and beauty.

But in any event—whether beautiful or unattractive—many women by their very physical nature are apt to suffer distressing symptoms on 'certain days' of the month.

This Is Something You Shouldn't Joke About

In case female functional monthly disturbances cause *you*—like so many unfortunates—to suffer from pain, nervous distress and feel so tired and cranky you lose your sense of humor—this is nothing to joke about.

Start right away—try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound to relieve such symptoms! It's famous for this purpose! Taken regularly thruout the month—this great medicine helps build up resistance against such female distress.

For over 70 years Pinkham's Compound has been helping thousands upon thousands of girls and women in this way. Time has *proved* it one of the most effective medicines for this purpose. Just see if you, too, don't remarkably benefit. Pinkham's Compound is also a splendid stomachic tonic. It is certainly *worth trying!* Any drugstore.

Lydia E. Pinkham's
VEGETABLE COMPOUND

Woman-Talk

BY MARGARET FISHBACK

WHO'S JUDGING WHOM?—Parents are given to ordering their young around, telling them what's wrong with their behavior, and describing some of the treasures they collect as "trash." If children didn't have an ample reservoir of patience along with their native dynamite, we parents would get more back talk than we do. Why, for example, should I tell my youngster to get rid of those old pieces of cardboard on which he has drawn wavering railroad tracks, complete with switches which he wants to add to a real track, because I've been unable to find switches in the stores? I ought to be grateful that he has the ingenuity and imagination, not to mention the patience, to content himself with his own raggedy product. He doesn't call *my* papers trash, or tell me to throw letters away, so why should I belittle *his* handiwork by calling it trash and claiming that it litters up his room? It's *his* room, isn't it? Or is it? It certainly isn't, if I am forever snooping and interfering. And what if he *does* litter up the rest of the apartment? Thank heaven, children who feel secure in the love of their parents, have great self-sufficiency and also a nifty mechanism by which they close their ears and literally do not hear the tiresome yappings of grown-ups. It is Nature's own miracle that we do not break their pride or humiliate them by our condescensions.

BŒUF A LA BALLET: Encountering artist Lester Gaba at the new Krene showroom (30 East Forty-second Street), where the press converged for a preview of plastic shower curtains beautifully decked with silk-screen-printed murals, I was regaled by Lester's story of his joust with a beef stew at the ballet. With a deadline to meet, he was unable to attend a dinner to be given before the ballet by the young lady he was to escort. When she said, "We're going to have beef stew, so you'd better come," he replied with anguish, "I'm so behind on my schedule, I won't have time for any supper at all, so bring me a spot of beef from the stew, and I'll have it before the ballet." His benefactress, a merciful but facetious female, arrived at the ballet and handed Lester a large steaming paper bag in which he found, as the curtain rose, a casserole brimming with beef stew. "What in heaven's name am I supposed to do with this?" asked Lester, hungrier by the second, as the heavenly vapors rose. "Eat it, of course. It will be dark as soon as the performance starts," urged his hostess. No sooner had he removed the top of the casserole, than late arrivals, including a parade of friends and acquaintances with seats beyond his, forced him to rise, holding the steaming casserole aloft. First came Grover Whalen and Mrs. Whalen. No sooner had Lester settled down, beef stew in lap, than Mme. Daché and her husband squeezed in front of him, followed in five minutes by Eleanor Lambert and *her* mate. At this point the hungry Gaba gave up, and parked the stew under his chair. During the intermission he retrieved it and finally had supper. . . . The silk-screen murals on Krene's plastic shower curtains ran the gamut from seascapes complete with graceful fish and snails, to a lovely wistaria pattern, and a charming combination of stripes and flowers. They are promised for 1947. Meanwhile I shall go on happily using my 1946 Krene job, a heavenly translucent blue, which has withstood the rough treatment and excessive watering given it for the past year by my aquatic young son.

SHORT CUTS: The easiest way to mix flour with water or milk is to put the liquid in a jar, add the flour, screw the top on tight, and give the works a good shaking. . . . To keep salt from getting damp, leave it in a container overnight near the pilot light on the stove. . . . Keep an old pillowcase handy and slip it over the end of the ironing-board cover before pressing clothes that are not color-fast. It will bear the brunt and protect the regular cover.

NOCTURNE CREOLE

Continued from Page 44

naud Blanchissard, would materialize out of the blurred past.

Now Aunt Cécile rose and crossed to a gate-leg table with a marble top. She opened a drawer.

"Here," she said, "is a picture of your husband to be. Is he not handsome? Now that you have regained your senses, you will agree. It is proper that you should place this now on your boudoir table."

The head in the old-fashioned photograph was of a middle-aged man, gimlet eyed, with a large mole on his nose. She felt the lids of her eyes stinging. In a wave of tenderness for her mother, for this man who was most likely long dead as Aunt Cécile had "dreamed" him, and for these elfin aging children lost in the high woods of old illusion, she rose, clutching the picture.

"All right, Aunt Cécile. I'm—sleepy now."

The old man got to his feet.

"Take the child to her room, Cécile. I shall tell Arnaud that she is *très fatiguée.*" He sighed. "Ah, this is a happy night. Of course, it could turn out no other way—for a de Rivière."

"Neither for a Charlevoix of my family," Aunt Cécile piped pertly.

"Indeed." He bowed. "I believe—I believe we Creoles are in for happier times. That is what I say at the coffee house. I never supposed those ill-bred Americans were here to stay. They are fickle. They will see that we hold them in contempt and go away." His voice held a pontifical note: "My father watched the changing of the flags in the Place d'Armes in 1803—and he wept. Still, he was of the opinion that this barbarian regime could not last."

He swayed, braced himself against the back of the chair. "I shall wait for Arnaud," he said.

And Aunt Cécile touched Maryse's arm. *"Allons, petite."*

UP a narrow stair then, behind the soft spill of candlelight. The old woman paused before a massive door, pushed it open. The room was large and hermetically sealed against the night air. Aunt Cécile placed the saucer in which the candle was stuck on a marble-topped washstand. Maryse looked about in awe. The place would have been surprising enough to young eyes in daylight; now, in the weave of shadow and yellow light, it was fantastic.

Across the room was a little altar and the statues of three saints over a jar of holy water and clusters of votive candles. Dominating the room was a huge four-poster bed which boasted a great pink tester on which cupids frolicked. A tall armoire with mirror doors tossed back the feeble radiance.

Maryse inhaled.

This was her mother's room. Clearly nothing had been changed.

There was even the bridal tester; at which her mother doubtless had lain scowling in rebellion.

Aunt Cécile pattered to the armoire and extracted a long lacy nightgown. She spread this across the bed. Then she approached and kissed Maryse lightly on the forehead.

"Bon soir," she whispered. *"Je comprends.* I understand. It was the same in my time, but it is better to do as the Creoles do."

And then she was gone, without the candle, into familiar dark. Maryse got the impression that her aunt was blind. Her movements were so sure.

Maryse undressed slowly. Slipping into the cool old-fashioned gown gave her an odd, protected feeling. She quenched the candle and slid into the great soft bed. For a little while she was happy; she was full of gratitude to her uncle and her aunt. She would play their innocent, pitiful game, and she would never hurt them or allow them to be hurt by the hateful world they had fled.

And then she thought of the stern-eyed gentleman whose picture stared at her across the black room. Suppose there was such a person still alive. Suppose he was actually coming to discuss marriage to Rivé de Rivière's niece—to herself! A new foreboding began to crawl along her nerves. Suppose—why, suppose Hank, the scene in the hotel, all the sordid heartbreak of the early hours—suppose *that* was illusion, *that* was dream instead of *this!* Panic brushed her. She must not think of it. She must sleep.

AT that moment the musical note of the front doorbell floated up. Arnaud Blanchissard! Then he had come and it was true. She thought she could make out the rumble of voices. When did these people sleep? Or did they sleep? Once she thought she heard the mice-rustle of Aunt Cécile's footsteps in the corridor. Quickly she slid from the bed and tried the door. It was locked.

Maryse returned to bed slowly. For the first time full realization swept her that she was alone in this house with two crazy people. She remembered the policeman's hesitation.

She could dress, pound on the door, demand release. But if Aunt Cécile and Uncle Rivé were truly demented there was no predicting what they might do. And behind this consideration was another: She had no money and nowhere else to go. Once again resentment of Hank was a pink mist over the bottoms of her eyes, hotter than tears. She didn't care. She'd rather be crazy here with Aunt Cécile and Uncle Rivé than take the insults of that—that American barbarian from the North. *"Creole! . . . I got the dope. You're just—mongrel, that's all."*

She wept quietly awhile, feeling sorry for herself. Finally she slept. And then she was awake, staring at the window. High up on the rectangle the drapes fell apart. Here was a streak of dull shine—glass reflecting some luminosity from the street. The noise that had awakened her began again, a scraping sound, not loud but regular.

THEN she saw a thing that bumped her heart. A man's hand was visible in the chink between the drapes. It held something and was moving in quick small strokes that made a scratching, scraping sound.

The thing to do was scream. Only she couldn't. Her throat worked but it was dry.

There was a minute tinkle. The hand disappeared. The window was being softly raised now. A waft of fresher air fanned her, increased. She watched a dark form bulge inward. . . . She wriggled to the far side of the bed, lifting the bedclothes, and sprawled over toward the floor.

She lay on the matting with ancient dust in her nostrils and heard the whisper:

"Maryse? You hee-r?"

She rotated her head.

"You hee-r?"

Indignation replaced terror with remarkable rapidity.

"Pierre!"

"Yes. Where are you?"

The thin beam of a pocket flashlight explored the room, the dressing table bearing the photograph of Arnaud Blanchissard, the bridal tester, the tall mirror—but missed her completely where she had now gained a sitting posture on the floor.

"How in the world did you get in here?"

Pierre said, "I find out the story of these people—for sentiment. Everybody knows. The cop on the beat; madame in the *rotisserie* on the corner. My *cousin's* brother know their *cousin.* I find all, ever't'ing!"

"Pierre! You get out of here at once!"

The beam, blinding, coned her eyes.

"Damn you! Turn off that light this second! Haven't you caused me *enough* trouble for one night? Get *out!"*

She crossed her arms in quick modesty. The light went.

He sighed largely. "I find out all, even where your mother room. Sometime I come look at it from street, thees window—for sentiment, you understan'? Maryse!" His voice was soft. "Eet ees impossible you stay here. Thees people, they are not right in the haid. They have one *grande hallucination!* Everybody come to house, they think if woman your mother coming back, if man your papa, who they think suitor they do not like. I come to talk and they run me off!"

Maryse felt her temper rising.

He added quickly, "Hank, he is near crazy. You come with me to your husban', hey?"

Anger was a relief after fear.

"Hank! I'd think you wouldn't want to fool around *him,* after what he did to *you!* I'm never going back. And you leave me alone. I'll call my uncle and have the police *take* you out!"

He stated mildly, "I have forgeeven. You can forgeeve, too. Hank, he come find me resting in Larabie lounge and apologize, explain. I apologize, explain. We explain my frien', manager Larabie. We make certain plans in this matter."

"Pierre! Leave, will you? You can tell Hank that I'm going to get an annulment and marry somebody else." She paused; then added im-

Advertisement

"It's only since Paw's been eatin' Wheaties that he cranks the car like this."

You're off to a fast start when you have a good breakfast—including milk, fruit, and Wheaties, "Breakfast of Champions." High-octane nourishment in those big whole wheat flakes. Plus plenty of zippy, zesty flavor. Just the ticket for a slow starting appetite: *Wheaties!*

"He's good, but he's no child prodigy!"

LIBERTY

petuously, "His picture's on the table behind you."

Pierre switched on the torch, picked out the photograph. Maryse heard an incredulous intake of breath.

"Mon Dieu! That's perhaps the man in the how-do-you-say, the ferry storee. You fall for that?"

The beam found her again.

"Turn off that light!"

But as the room flashed black the door burst open and a new and softer radiance spilled through. Over the threshold came Rivé de Rivière, an old-fashioned oil lamp balanced high in one hand, the needle gleam of a rapier flickering ahead of his charge.

Pierre dodged, retreated; but with astounding agility the old man pressed him, cornered him against the mirrored door of the armoire, held the rapier ominously poised at his throat.

This was accompanied by a torrent of vehement French. Maryse caught a phrase—*"Vous, Paul Ducros!"* It gave her the odd swirling impression of blended reality and dream: her uncle thought Pierre was Paul Ducros, the impetuous boy who had taken her mother away so long ago.

Pierre was discreetly immobile under the threatening point of the rapier. He replied with French equally voluble. She caught only the drift of it; but unless her rusty French deceived her, what Pierre was saying was the most astonishing development so far. He was admitting that he was Paul Ducros! Claiming that he had simply come to say good-by, that he recognized the insanity of his project, the ultimate good sense that she, Maryse, had shown in her decision to marry as her uncle suggested—and he was offering abject apologies for the intrusion. *"C'est l'amour, m'sieu. Vous vous souvenez?"*

Rivé de Rivière's thin shoulders, so stanch a moment before, sagged slightly. He set the lamp beside the picture of Arnaud Blanchissard. His rapier dipped and he was silent.

Without a glance at her, Pierre bowed, crossed in front of her uncle, and went through the door. She heard his footsteps descending the stair. After a moment, leaving the lamp, Rivé followed.

Maryse rose, shivering, and because she did not know what else to do, got back into bed. She'd leave the light. She could not bear more darkness. But presently she heard the soft rustle of Aunt Cécile's feet.

The old woman seated herself in a rocker at the foot of the bed. She folded her hands in her lap and Maryse listened to the regular hypnotic creaking of the chair. She adjourned thought. Her eyes stung. Sleep took her in a rush.

IT was dark, patent-leather, dreamless sleep. Then she was being shaken. She came awake, the long, creased face of Aunt Cécile bending over her.

"Maryse! Maryse! *Il est arrivé.* He has come. *Habillez-vous!* Dress! Quickly."

Maryse poked fists, childlike, into her eyes, sat up and peered around.

"What's that? Who do you mean?"

"Your fiancé, of course. Arnaud Blanchissard is below with your uncle and the marriage settlement is made. He wishes to pay his respects. Dress quickly, my dear."

Maryse frowned. She did not want any more riddles. She was a tired Alice and she wanted home from Wonderland.

"What time is it?" she demanded of her aunt reproachfully.

"Time?"

The pale old eyes were uncomprehending. Maryse remembered that time had been repudiated in this house. She sighed, swinging her feet to the floor. Aunt Cécile began to pour water into the china basin from a narrow-necked pitcher.

"He must not wait," she murmured.

In her underwear and stockings Maryse reached for the dress she had placed across a straight chair in the corner. She hesitated and glanced at the tall armoire. Reflectively she stepped over and opened the mirror door. An overpowering scent of sachet and moth balls blew out. Inside many dresses hung.

Maryse took one down carefully. It was long, tight-waisted, low-necked, with a hint of a hoop.

"Is this—" She had started to say, "my mother's," but asked instead, "mine?"

Aunt Cécile came close, ran her hands over the frilly garment.

"You know well it is not. You with your modern Yankee clothes! That is my own frock. I wore it while engaged to Rivé."

"Could I wear it?"

"But *certainement!"*

Maryse got into it with professional dexterity. She pirouetted before the mirror. The fit was perfect and she knew that she was beautiful. And then came the dour memory that there was nobody she cared about looking beautiful for.

Oh, but—there was Arnaud Blanchissard, waiting! She turned to her aunt. "You say—Arnaud Blanchissard is *downstairs?"*

"Of course. Did your uncle not say he was coming? Hurry. We will go to greet him."

"All right," Maryse pronounced grimly. "Let's go greet him, auntie!"

DESCENDING the dark well of the stair, her aunt's sure, light step behind her, she felt committed to a wild trajectory; there was no turning back. And somewhere she would force a solution to the whole bewitched night.

She opened the door to the informal parlor. And gasped.

Two men rose. One was Uncle Rivé, jaunty, apparently unruffled by the adventures of the night. The other was a large man dressed similarly in a long-tailed pinkish suit. The suit was too small for him. The waistcoat was so tight that there were scallops between the straining buttons. He had a mole on his nose. For an instant Maryse was sure that this was indeed Arnaud Blanchissard, her mother's rejected suitor; and she could well understand why he had been rejected. He looked all wrong. He looked absurd. But he also looked much younger than she had expected.

And then the masquerade swiftly collapsed. Maryse flushed. She was standing face to face with Hank.

Hank crimsoned. But he resolutely did what he had so transparently been instructed by Pierre to do. He took two steps forward, seized Maryse's hand and kissed it.

"Ah," piped the thin voice of Rivé

de Rivière. "I have so long looked forward to this moment!"

"Comme deux colombes!" murmured Aunt Cécile with sentiment.

And the wild temper that rose in Maryse was checked. She wanted to slap this great bumbling oaf and tell him what kind of guy she thought him to be: a heel. But she could not wound these gentle ghosts from another time, she could not smash their dream. Her heart rose in her breast. She felt grossly tricked and humiliated by Hank.

"You!" she breathed, low but not too low for Hank to hear. "I hate you!"

He said foolishly, "I'm Arnaud Blanchissard, your fiancé." And mispronounced the name.

But Uncle Rivé was spreading the double doors into the formal parlor.

"We will use *le salon de forme.* Cécile, bring wine!"

The formal parlor was much like the other, except that it was larger and a great glass chandelier bearing small oil lamps hung in the center. These Rivé proceeded to light with a long crooked flambeau.

MARYSE found herself inside. The place was heavy with the musty airlessness of decades.

Cécile fluttered in with a tray arranged with a magnolia blossom in the center and tiny goblets of pale wine.

Maryse was worried about Hank's lack of French. However, these old people habitually responded in the language in which they were addressed. It was a cultural courtesy to be bilingual. So Hank got away with it.

They drank, Hank's eyes wandering from Maryse (and she could not help remembering that her costume was spectacular and lovely) to the old people and around the room, astonished.

You can stretch a rubber band out and out—and then it snaps and stings your hand. This situation was like that, Maryse thought: it could not be stretched to any more fantastic lengths.

She risked a surreptitious glance at Hank while Uncle Rivé was addressing some pleasantry to him. She saw that while his eyes were bloodshot, he was sober.

And then, deftly, before she realized what was happening, her aunt and uncle had withdrawn from the room—but not very far. They sat within the informal parlor, the doors open. Aunt Cécile pretended to crochet.

Hank backed up awkwardly to a sofa.

"Sit down, will you, a minute?"

There was an embarrassment close to panic in his voice. Relishing this, Maryse took a chair five feet from him and smoothed out her skirts. She gave him a hard stare.

"I want—" His voice came out too loud. He lowered it. "I want to apologize."

"There's no apology for what you did. There's only one thing I want from you—not to hurt these sweet old people. Play out this little scene a few more minutes. And then get—for good!"

"Maryse—" There were tears behind his voice. She loved it. "Maryse, couldn't you possibly—"

"I couldn't." Her tone was icy, utterly self-possessed. "How did you hit on this little scheme for continuing to be a nuisance?"

She knew he was flinching, as much under her manner as her words.

He cleared his throat. "Well, I slept for an hour. I was drunk, you see—"

"Yes, I know."

"Well, I slept. Then I went out and walked, looking for you. I drank hot coffee. I walked some more—then I went back to Larabie's and found Pierre. I—I thought I'd lost you, but I could apologize to him for being such a heel. He's a great guy. He didn't know— Well, he's a great guy. And he helped me look for you."

"I thought maybe you wanted to hit me again. That you hadn't done the job properly. Pierre seems to like being hit. I don't."

She knew that her words were

JACK PLAYED IN LUCK WHEN • • •
MOTOR CRUISER "ELENA" REPORTED IN DISTRESS OFF CATFISH SHOALS. RESCUE CRAFT • • •
JEEPERS! THERE SHE IS!
JACK LEVEL AND LOU McKIEL, EX-SEABEES, ARE ON THE SECOND DAY OF A ROUGH RUN DOWN THE COAST IN THEIR NEWLY-PURCHASED NAVY "SURPLUS" BOAT, WHEN • •
MY ENGINE'S DEAD! ARE YOU THE RESCUE CRAFT?
NO, BUT I DO KNOW ENGINES. HEAVE US A LINE
ELENA MIA
20 MINUTES LATER
WE'RE BLOWING ONTO THE SHOALS!
TELL YOUR DAD WE'RE O.K., MISS. THE ENGINE'LL START NOW
YOU GOT US OUT OF A NASTY FIX. I WAS ABSOLUTELY HELPLESS
CATFISH SHOALS HAVE BEEN BAD NEWS FOR MANY A VESSEL
COME ABOARD WHEN WE ANCHOR. WE'RE INVITED FOR CHOW
I'LL START SUPPER, DAD, WHILE YOU MEN CLEAN UP
ELENA
SAY, THIS BLADE'S A PIP. NEVER GOT RID OF WHISKERS FASTER OR EASIER
IT'S A THIN GILLETTE • • • AND PLENTY KEEN
WE PLAN TO FIX UP OUR TUB AND START A FISHING SERVICE
THAT'S A WASTE OF TALENT. MY CONSTRUCTION FIRM NEEDS MEN LIKE YOU
HE'S CERTAINLY HANDSOME
I'M PUTTING IT STRAIGHT, MEN, WHEN I SAY YOU GET REAL SHAVING SPEED AND COMFORT WITH THIN GILLETTES. THEY'RE THE KEENEST, LONGEST-LASTING BLADES IN THE LOW-PRICE FIELD. AND, BECAUSE THEY FIT YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR PRECISELY, YOU'RE PROTECTED AGAINST THE SCRAPE AND IRRITATION CAUSED BY MISFIT BLADES. ASK FOR THIN GILLETTES
THIN Gillette BLADES
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flailing him like whips. She fought down a surprising surge of pity.

He breathed deep and struggled on. "Pierre said he had an almost positive hunch where to find you. He said he knew—how to get you back. Made me rent this thing, follow him, and put on this crazy act in here. I'm sorry. I guess it wasn't any good." He glanced down helplessly at his bizarre costume. "Funny, if I stay like this I'll get to doing it myself—thinking I'm a Creole back in the past." He suddenly clawed off the ersatz mole, and continued, a little wildly, "But I love Creoles. I do, honest, honey, I do. I'll always love 'em." He was such an utter little boy. "Look. Can't you forgive me? I can't do without Creoles. And if—" He floundered a moment, recovered, grew so red that she was afraid his face would burst. "If we ever had a baby—I mean, mightn't it be O.K.—to be half heel, half angel?" It was his first essay at gallantry.

A storm of unexpected laughter shook her. She fought it. She must not let hysteria come now. She must be calm—cold. And she could not. A subtle key had somehow opened the door she had slammed on her love. A singing warmth rose through her.

It wasn't any use. There was no escape into the past, into bitterness, into hate. The Yankees had come to stay. The Chinese, her father had told her once, knew what to do with invaders: absorb them. And it was astounding how very much she wanted to absorb Hank Smith.

THEY didn't say anything, but they both knew. They rose. He moved toward her.

Suddenly he snapped a finger.

"We're dressed. And I've got tickets for one of the big balls. Let's go!"

She shook her head. But she smiled. "No chance. We're only engaged, you know. You must call like this, court me for six months."

She motioned with her head toward the informal parlor.

Hank stared thoughtfully at the doorway. He walked toward it, murmuring, "But they have funny ideas about time. So the cop said."

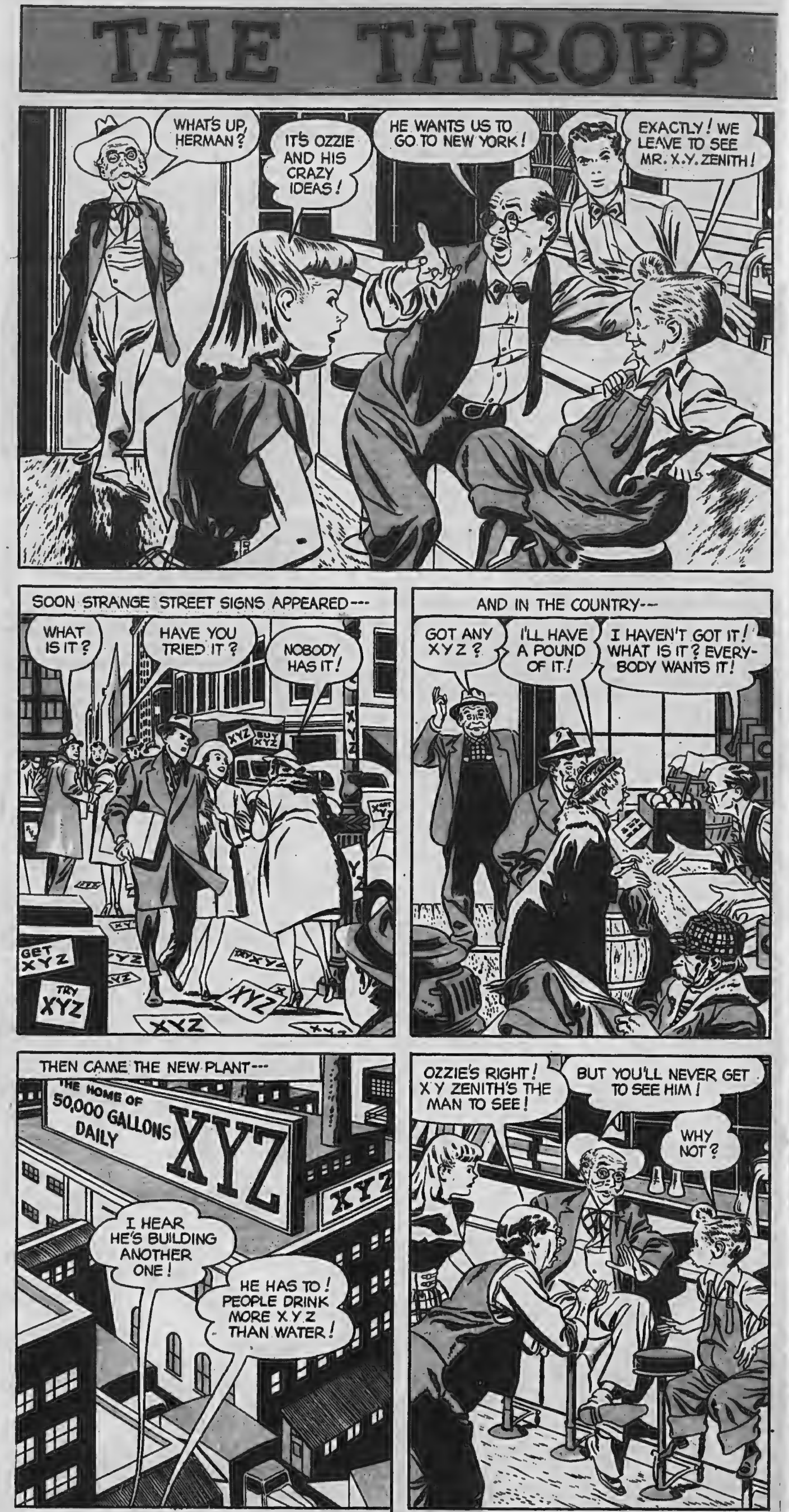
"*Tante* Cécile," he addressed her with surprising correctness. Maryse could only see his back. "I have my carriage outside. I was wondering if you'd allow Maryse to come and visit my old grandmother for a little while. Just to speak. We'll be back in twenty minutes."

"*Vingt minutes?*" The thin voice carried a doubtful note. "What do you think, Rivé?"

"It is not done," declared Uncle Rivé. "Still—they are formally affianced. And we must, I suppose, make some slight concession to modern ways." A sigh. "And for twenty minutes—there can be no harm."

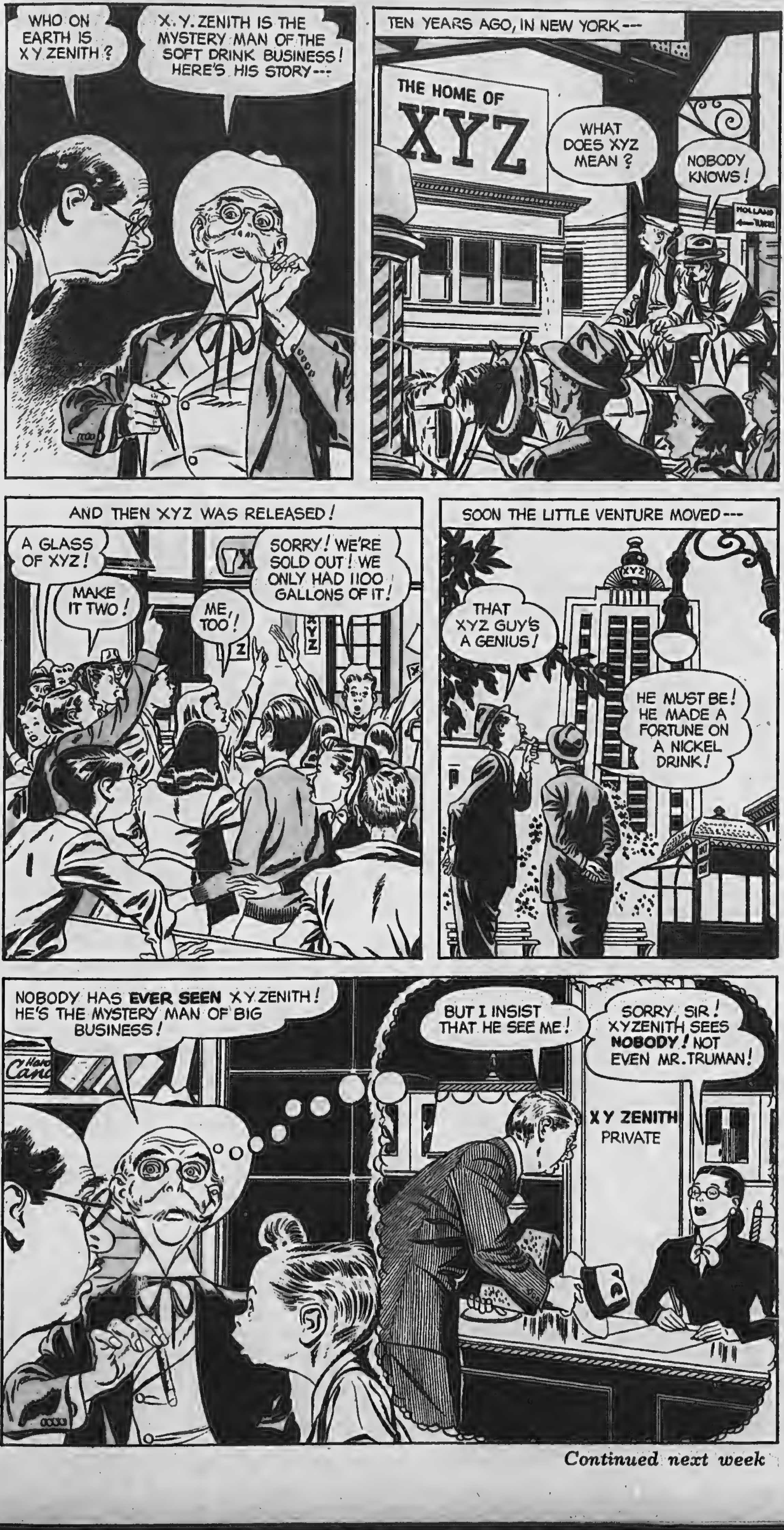
No harm, sang Maryse's heart. No harm, with chaperons to whom twenty minutes—or twenty years—were the same.

THE END


THE THROPP
WHAT'S UP, HERMAN?
IT'S OZZIE AND HIS CRAZY IDEAS!
HE WANTS US TO GO TO NEW YORK!
EXACTLY! WE LEAVE TO SEE MR. X.Y. ZENITH!
SOON STRANGE STREET SIGNS APPEARED---
WHAT IS IT?
HAVE YOU TRIED IT?
NOBODY HAS IT!
XYZ
BUY XYZ
GET XYZ
TRY XYZ
AND IN THE COUNTRY--
GOT ANY XYZ?
I'LL HAVE A POUND OF IT!
I HAVEN'T GOT IT! WHAT IS IT? EVERYBODY WANTS IT!
THEN CAME THE NEW PLANT---
THE HOME OF 50,000 GALLONS DAILY XYZ
XYZ
I HEAR HE'S BUILDING ANOTHER ONE!
HE HAS TO! PEOPLE DRINK MORE XYZ THAN WATER!
OZZIE'S RIGHT! XY ZENITH'S THE MAN TO SEE!
BUT YOU'LL NEVER GET TO SEE HIM!
WHY NOT?

FAMILY

Written by **LAWRENCE LARIAR**
Illustrated by **DONLOU**


WHO ON EARTH IS XY ZENITH?
X. Y. ZENITH IS THE MYSTERY MAN OF THE SOFT DRINK BUSINESS! HERE'S HIS STORY---
TEN YEARS AGO, IN NEW YORK---
THE HOME OF XYZ
WHAT DOES XYZ MEAN?
NOBODY KNOWS!
HOLLAND ← TUNNEL
AND THEN XYZ WAS RELEASED!
A GLASS OF XYZ!
MAKE IT TWO!
ME, TOO!
SORRY! WE'RE SOLD OUT! WE ONLY HAD 1100 GALLONS OF IT!
SOON THE LITTLE VENTURE MOVED---
XYZ
THAT XYZ GUY'S A GENIUS!
HE MUST BE! HE MADE A FORTUNE ON A NICKEL DRINK!
NOBODY HAS EVER SEEN XY ZENITH! HE'S THE MYSTERY MAN OF BIG BUSINESS!
BUT I INSIST THAT HE SEE ME!
SORRY, SIR! XYZENITH SEES NOBODY! NOT EVEN MR. TRUMAN!
XY ZENITH PRIVATE

Continued next week

ONE BULLET

Continued from Page 23

antagonism toward the man had grown into a vague distrust.

"Your rifle," Gómez asked, "it is for sale?"

Startled, Quade said, "Certainly not!"

Gómez sighed. "I suppose not. But it would be most useful in my work. I would pay a high price for one like it."

Unconsciously Quade curled his forefinger over the trigger guard. It was a German sporting model with open tangent-curve sight, chambered for 30.06 ammunition, light and ideal for hunting in rough country. There were later and better models, but with the Mauser Quade had bagged every known grizzly species from a Montana silvertip to a Himalayan blue—every species with the exception of a Severtzow. "It's not for sale," he repeated.

Gómez laughed. "I understand. It is only that I need a new rifle. And one cannot buy them in all China nowadays."

"You can pick up a Jap Arisaka without too much trouble."

"Ah, yes. But I am a perfectionist. I want only the best."

GÓMEZ prodded the embers with his boot and the fire settled with a soft hiss of ashes. Too casually he said, "This evening from the trail I happened to see a *ma hsiung*, a horse bear. They are no longer plentiful in these mountains."

Quade stiffened. "I thought you favored deer."

"I favor whatever I can sell at a profit," Gómez corrected. "Today I could sell that bear skin for not less than one hundred rupees."

Quade said nothing. He debated whether Gómez had any idea of the Severtzow's real value. No zoo in the world owned a live specimen and only one American museum had a mounted hide.

"Perhaps it is worth my while to stay over tomorrow and join your hunt, colonel."

Quade met his eyes. With an effort he said, "I wish you luck."

"It is not a matter of luck, if you will pardon me." Gómez gave him a sly smile. "The *ma hsiung* is very timid. One must stalk her with extreme care. A single accidental shot, for instance—" His voice faded.

Quade flushed. The blackmail threat was so crude and so preposterous that he found it hard to believe. One shot in the air would finish this hunt for him; the grizzly would bolt, and it might take him weeks to track down and corner her again. Gómez had sized him up from the start. Quade saw that his one alternative was to bargain. "All right, Gómez," he said grimly. "How much do you want?"

"Please!" Gómez shook his head. "Let us make of this a sporting proposition."

"Never mind the frills. Name your terms."

"I suggest a small bet," Gómez went on. "Tomorrow, at daybreak, let us say, we shall start from opposite ends of the valley and proceed toward the center, where I last saw the bear. Whichever of us shoots her first takes the pelt. Is that not fair?"

"You're not serious!"

"You have a—more practical suggestion, colonel?"

Quade snorted. As a contest it was absurd; too much depended on weather and wind and other unpredictable factors, and much too much on the word of Gómez. He said, "You like to bet on a sure thing."

"Not at all. I propose that we limit ourselves to two cartridges apiece. Two and no more. In that way both will have an equal chance. A very sporty proposition."

"Why two cartridges?" Quade snapped. "Let's give the grizzly a chance too." He was angry now. "An expert can do it with one."

Gómez looked at him steadily. "A single shot apiece then," he said slowly. "As you wish. Your rifle against mine." He unslung the piece from his back and cradled it in his elbow. "A Lee-Enfield .303."

Quade made one more try. "You're not going through with this?" he demanded. "You clear out tomorrow morning and I'll give you the price of a new Mauser in U. S. dollars. I don't want your Enfield."

"And I do not want your dollars," Gómez said softly. "Is it a match?"

Quade had no choice, he knew that, but one shot was better than none. But more than that, trimming a game hog like Gómez would afford him a very special pleasure. "Why not?" he said. "Match!"

QUADE came awake all at once. He lay tensed in his eiderdown for several minutes. Dark still clung over the mountains, but the eastern sky had paled to a sullen gray, a still and windless dawn with promise of a fair morning. He slid from his roll and pulled out his Mauser, together with a fresh box of shells. He balanced the box in his palm thoughtfully and selected one, wiped the jacket clean and levered the shell into the chamber. The rest of the box he buried in his pack.

Gómez was already at the fire. Quade joined him and drank his coffee in silence. They had agreed the night before that Gómez was to ride around the valley rim to the far end, approximately an hour distant, and that at seven thirty both would commence the hunt on foot, advancing toward each other. It was six thirty and Gómez mounted.

He held out a cartridge for Quade's approval. "Is the colonel satisfied?" Gómez said. "Or perhaps he has changed his mind?"

Quade eyed him in disgust. He said, "You made the rules. I'll stick by them as long as you do."

Gómez shrugged his shoulders. "Until we meet again," he said. "Good hunting."

CHUMP CHOP
TONY BASSO

"Hereafter I'll do the talking!"
LIBERTY

Quade waited in camp with the Tibetans, pacing back and forth impatiently and checking his watch. He had no illusions about his opponent; the thick fog which mantled the valley was his guaranty that Gómez would adhere to the time agreement.

Presently the sky took on a rosy tint and the first thin shaft of sun broke through the overcast. The mist began to dissipate and drift away in long fleecy streamers until the whole panorama of peaks stood unveiled and he could make out the stream in the bottoms. He took a last sight on the clearing and climbed down over a band of slippery lichen-covered stone into the upper fringe of timber. Low-hanging boughs swiped at him. He guided himself by the rumble of the river.

Systematically Quade planned his tactics. By now Gómez would be closing in from the opposite direction, to trap the grizzly somewhere between them; probably they were less than a mile apart. Several times he noticed deer droppings, but he had yet to see one of the tiny fleet creatures. Gómez had cleaned them out of this place too.

Reaching the valley floor, he moved along carefully to avoid snapping twigs and crunching underfoot the occasional talus spillways. He circled a patch of melting snow and came upon recent bear sign. Farther on he paused abruptly beside a clump of flattened bracken where the grizzly had bedded overnight. He knelt down to examine a set of huge five-clawed pawprints on the spongy turf around it, and discovered a few coarse brown hairs.

This was his first real break. The second was a light breeze which had just sprung up, blowing from the high tableland to the west; Gómez was upwind, where his man-scent would carry back to the grizzly. Luck was coming Quade's way at last.

Stooped low, he followed the tracks through a tangle of thorn onto a slight rocky eminence where they played out. He crouched there, one hand shading his eyes as he stared across the top of the brush and dropped on all fours. The grizzly was feeding across a gravel bar just beyond. Squirming forward on his stomach, Quade parted the leaves and brought the Mauser to his shoulder.

The bear waded into the shallows, muzzling the water and splashing, her coat a glowing cocoa in the mid-morning glare. Quade dug in both toes and eased the stock against his cheek. It was a comparatively easy shot, around two hundred and fifty yards, and he squinted along the barrel and lined his front-sight blade on the hump of the grizzly's back at the shoulder band.

He was taut with excitement. Automatically he checked his position, took a half breath and held it. The grizzly was a perfect target against the stream's foamy background. Quads braced his left elbow and snicked off the safety. The bear lifted her head and blinked in his direction, but still he did not fire.

His lips tightened. He had never been superstitious about game, nor sentimental, and yet a sort of reluctance pricked him, some inner prompting which his experience warned him not to ignore. Gingerly he lowered the gun and glanced over his shoulder.

Something glinted brightly on the hillside behind him and winked out. A sudden panic chilled him. For an instant Quade stared, expecting the light to reappear, and then rolled over into the deep grass. He had lived through too many campaigns not to recognize the flash of sun on a rifle, and he realized Gómez was stalking him.

AS he inched away from his exposed position his mind worked out the answer with a cool remorseless logic. He had been a fool to trust Gómez in any detail. Gómez had hidden along the trail, doubled back to camp for more shells, and followed him into the valley, biding his time for a sure shot in the back. Only the presence of the Tibetans in camp had saved him the night before. This way there would be a shot or two, without witnesses, and Gómez would report an "accident" to the indifferent local authorities.

Quade crawled to a log and sprawled behind it. That Gómez wanted his rifle more than the grizzly hide, he understood and accepted with matter-of-fact resignation. Gómez would like both if he could get them. If Quade had fired at the bear, he would be dead now; that much was sure. But as long as he still had the single cartridge, Gómez would be wary.

He swept his gaze across the hillside, searching for a telltale switch of brush or another glint of metal, but he saw nothing. A swarm of gnats hovered above him in a black cloud and a lone eagle soared in an ascending spiral. Had Gómez spotted him yet? It was a gamble Quade could not afford. On his hands and knees he retreated into the thorn thicket. Gómez, with plenty of ammunition, blocked his return to camp; but if he could elude Gómez for the remaining daylight hours he might still be able to slip around behind him after dark.

A belt of fir stretched away on his left and he plunged into its dank protection. The ground was boggy, fed by springs, and he skirted the mud. With each step the weariness in his legs sharpened into pain, and yet he dared not stop.

Through an aisle in the trees he caught a glimpse of the bear still grazing along the riverside. She was no longer important, a bystander in Gómez' deadly pursuit. She had been the bait to lure him, nothing more. But slowly an idea took shape in his mind. Undoubtedly Gómez had seen the grizzly too; that she was still there proved Gómez' intent beyond any doubt, otherwise he would have shot. Instead, he was watching her, waiting for Quade to fire and reveal himself. His own life, Quade thought bitterly, hinged upon whatever the grizzly did within the next few hours.

He came out on the river around a bend, well below the gravel bar, and floundered through a chain of hip-deep pools, gasping at the shock of the current. On the opposite bank he pulled himself out into a screen of willow, no longer bothering to conceal his tracks, and took his bearings. It was past noon and the wind might shift any time.

The sun beat down with oppressive warmth and the silence closed around him. He felt as though he were running from a shadow, some fantasia of his imagination. He had not seen Gómez, nor heard him. The one reality in the situation was the bear. And because of her he needed all his skill, all his training now merely to survive.

A STUBBORN desperate resolve drove him back along the western slope. The growth was stunted on this side, scarcely waist-high, and he utilized every scrap of cover and concealment, rubbing his knees and elbows raw. At any second, at any careless movement, Gómez might shoot: he would know by now that something was wrong. From time to time Quade looked back, straining to detect some sign of Gómez, but there was only the river's murmur. His respect for the man's stealth grew. Gómez was an expert himself, a bush-wise professional—not any easily tricked novice.

He picked a vantage point—a fan of terminal moraine that had formed below the lip of an overhanging tributary canyon—and fought off his urge to hurry. A foot at a time he moved ahead, finding somewhere in himself the self-control to creep and crawl. If he snapped now, if he gave way to the strain and broke for camp, Gómez would pick him off within a few paces. All his faculties focused into a single purpose of retaliation. When the time came, he would make his one bullet count.

When he finally reached the head of the rock field, Quade was trembling with exhaustion, but what he had to do fortified his determination. It had been more than three hours since he first sighted the grizzly. Since then he had pivoted a hundred-and-eighty degree circle entirely around her to the opposite point of the compass. A sheer cliff face shut off any further advance. He was cornered between it and Gómez, who, if his calculations were right, must be working out his track close behind.

Quade blew the dust out of his muzzle and settled himself behind a boulder which commanded the widest possible field of fire.

THE grizzly lay in a sandy pocket of beach with her head resting between her paws. All morning long she had been uncomfortably restive and she rose with a peevish growl. She tilted her head into the wind, relishing the first pleasant pang of hunger. The far reach of the bar was blurred to her vision, but a keen sense of smell relayed to her brain the information that fresh live food was not far off.

She had not tasted meat for some time and she glared fiercely across the stream, the hunger a sudden torment in her belly. Warily she sniffed the air currents, quivering with desire and a repressed frenzy lest the quarry escape. Waddling out into shoal water, she moistened her nose and snorted. Then she bounded on from rock to rock to the other bank, shook herself, and eased her massive body into the scrub with a noiseless sure-footed speed.

The tantalizing smell freshened and the grizzly quickened her stride. Ever alert to danger, she swiveled her snout as she padded upward, but the man-smell was submerged in the other stronger smell. The cushions of her paws muffled all sound of her approach and she felt the wild exhilaration of the stalk in her blood. She wheeled around an open stretch and burst out onto a fan of loose rock, her hindquarters gathered for a final pulverizing rush, but there she stopped short and tossed her head.

Nervous and puzzled, she peered across the rocks at what appeared to be a splotch of light-colored scrub, swaying close to the ground with an almost imperceptible motion. The scent of it, stronger than ever, lured her another few steps. The object held her interest so completely that she failed to hear the thin breathing noises which accompanied it. Her

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nose warned her first, and she poised for flight, every hair along her spine bristling with revulsion and fright at the hated man-smell.

A head and shoulders rose abruptly from the brush and jerked around. For a fragment of a second, which seemed much longer to both, man and bear stared in utter disbelief across the twenty-odd feet of space. The grizzly reared to her hind legs towering full height, and gave a bellow of frustrated rage. She whirled about and lunged down the slope, smashing everything in her path as her momentum gathered into a gallop.

Gómez crouched in his tracks an instant longer, too stunned and shaken to act, and then he leaped up and fired. He snapped off shot after shot with a blind frantic aim until his rifle reports filled the valley with a solid sheet of echo. He emptied his clip and stood quite still. A series of crashes receded into the far distance and the grizzly was gone.

STILL dazed, he turned as Quade stepped from a boulder a few yards away. Quade was covering him with the Mauser and he walked toward Gómez grimly. "You missed her, Gómez," he said.

Gómez swallowed and his eyes wavered to the rifle. "Too bad," he mumbled. "Too bad she got away."

Quade looked at Gómez and looked at the empty cases on the ground. "I guess I win the bet," he said.

Gómez moistened his lips and forced them into a sickly grin. "You make a joke, colonel. Nobody wins. The match, it is a stand-off."

"You're wrong about that," Quade said quietly. "You lose." The fear was working on the man's face, a sheer animal terror of death. Quade felt no pity, only vast contempt, and he said, "Drop your gun!"

Gómez let the Enfield slide between his fingers and his eyes widened in mute appeal. Quade scooped it up and smashed the butt and receiver against a rock and tossed the wreckage aside. Gómez gaped at him openmouthed. "Gómez," he said, "you smell!"

"But the bear?" Gomez stammered. "She—"

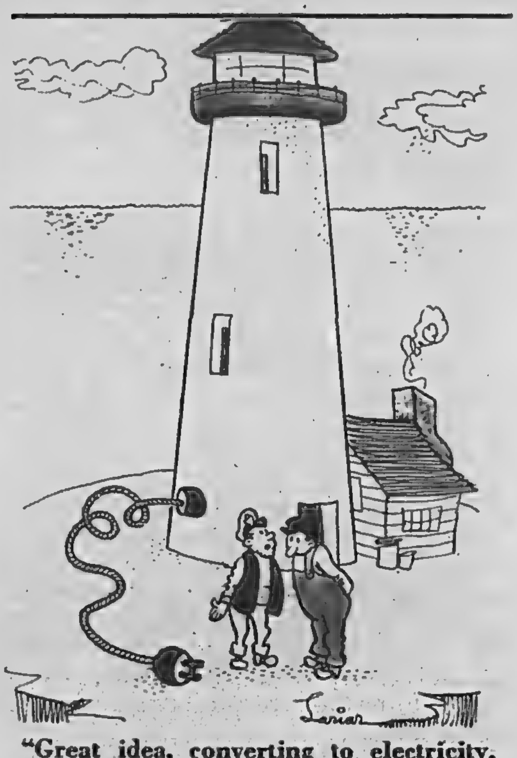
In spite of himself Quade winced at the ripe musk stink of the man. Stink was the only word for it.

"She smelled you, too, on the prevailing wind. Mistook you for a deer. So you were tracking me and she was tracking you. You both were so greedy you met head-on."

The shadows were beginning to lengthen and a tendril of evening mist curled over the valley. Quade glanced up at the peaks. Tomorrow he would start the long trek back to duty. He had missed his chance at a Severtzow and there was disappointment in that, but in a larger sense, he supposed, the hunt had been successful.

Certainly it was the best stalk of his career.

THE END



"Great idea, converting to electricity. Now where do we plug it in?"

LIBERTY

MR. MACAFEE RETURNS

Continued from Page 13

he can nurse with the others?" said the woman's voice.

The mental image that formed in Mr. MacAfee's mind was startling. If anyone, wings or no wings, thought he was going to learn humility that way, he had another guess coming. He'd starve first!

But canine instinct proved stronger than human imagination, and Mr. MacAfee finally fell asleep, as all good puppies should, with a full stomach.

THE litter was six weeks old. The other pups were sleeping in the sun, but Mr. MacAfee was wondering about the stock market and scratching his ear. The toothy woman pointed straight at him.

"Oh, the darling, the perfect little darling!" she said. "Could I see that one?"

Mr. MacAfee looked at her in alarm, but before he could bolt he was lifted and placed in her arms. She made gurgling noises, then said coyly, "Would oo like to be muvver's 'ittle lambkins?"

Mr. MacAfee especially loathed women who talked baby talk. She placed him on the ground and he backed away. "Come to mummikins," she drooled.

Mr. MacAfee had an inspiration. Stiffening one leg, he limped a few feet and fell over. He got up, limped a few steps more, and sat down.

"What's the matter with him?" the woman asked in a voice nine parts suspicion.

"Perhaps you'd better pick another one," said the nice woman who owned the kennels.

"Perhaps I'd better not pick any until you find out what's wrong with them," the other woman said acidly, and stalked to her car.

When she was gone, the nice lady spoke to her manager: "I don't think I'd really want her to have one of our pups." She knelt beside Mr. MacAfee. "What do you suppose ails this little fellow, Fred?"

Fred picked him up and felt of his legs. He looked at his nose. He set him down on his four feet. Mr. MacAfee was in a quandary. If he kept up the pretense, they might dose him with medicine. So he pranced around them, barking.

"He seems to be perfectly all right now," said the nice lady.

"In all my experience with dogs, I've never seen anything like that," Fred said. "I'll keep my eye on him for a few days, but if there's anything wrong with that pup, I'm a horse trainer."

Mr. MacAfee spent the rest of the afternoon trying to figure out an angle. He had to prevent anyone he didn't like from singling him out. When his kind of people came, he'd turn on enough canine charm to make them buy him. But how could he make himself unattractive to others?

He observed that people seemed to prefer the liveliest puppies. So when visitors arrived, he became languid and apathetic. The other pups would race for the wire, their tails wagging furiously. Mr. MacAfee would stretch out, raise his head to take one listless look at the visitors, and collapse into deep sleep.

The scheme worked beautifully. Fred began watching Mr. MacAfee when no strangers were present. He even hid behind trees to observe, as Mr. MacAfee frisked and cavorted with his brothers and sisters.

"It's *got* to be coincidence!" muttered Fred. And yet, every time—every single time! He's got me talking to myself, thought Fred. If he pulls that lackadaisical act just once more, I'll tie one on that will lose *two* week-ends.

PERHAPS the Fates conspired to keep Fred sober, for the next people who came down the path appealed instantly to Mr. MacAfee.

The girl was tawny-haired, with common sense written all over her face. She came just to the shoulder of the tall, rangy, amiable-looking man beside her. They stopped and looked at the pups. Mr. MacAfee dashed madly up and down the run.

"They're cute little rascals," said the man, "but honestly, Jo, I'd still rather have a Belgian shepherd."

She slipped an arm around his waist and said, "In our five-by-five apartment? It wouldn't add up, Cliff. Wait till we buy the farm, then you can be knee-deep in Belgian shepherds."

Mr. MacAfee was wagging his tail and looking straight up at them. Dissatisfied with this worm's-eye view, he romped to the back of the run for a better appraisal at longer range. Satisfied, he returned and barked at them.

"That's kind of a cute pup," said Cliff. And Mr. MacAfee's heart sank, for Cliff was not pointing at him.

Fred scooped up the other pup and handed it to Cliff, who gently stroked its ears. Icy apprehension numbed Mr. MacAfee. He mustn't get panicky; he mustn't let fear befuddle him. There must be some strategy—He isolated himself from the other pups, picking a patch of sunshine that served as a spotlight. He sat dejectedly and assumed a mournful expression. As Cliff and Jo took a final look at the other pups to make sure they'd chosen the best one, Mr. MacAfee let out a wail that epitomized the grief of the world.

Jo looked at Cliff. "That one actually seems disappointed because we didn't take him," she said.

"Could we have a look at that one too?" Cliff asked.

Fred's lips were compressed. His face was grim and taut. Mr. MacAfee's latest performance was almost too much for him, but he handed him to Cliff, who placed both pups on the ground.

"Which will it be, Jo?" he asked.

"Well, you picked that one first, so let's take that one," said Jo.

"Right-o," said Cliff as he picked up the other pup and handed it to her. "Lady, you've got yourself a dog."

Mr. MacAfee felt as if someone had suddenly pulled the world out from under him. Yet he had no feeling of chagrin at being unable to outmaneuver a normal cocker puppy. He was genuinely distressed.

No one else saw the shiny object fall as Cliff drew his gloves from his topcoat pocket. Mr. MacAfee put one paw over it as they started for the house to pay for the pup and get his papers. Fred started for Mr. MacAfee to put him back in the run. Mr. MacAfee deliberately shook his head no. Fred stopped in his tracks.

This gave Mr. MacAfee the time he needed.

He gave three short sharp barks. They were compelling, imperative. Everyone turned to look at him. Then, picking up the shiny object in his teeth, he trotted up to Cliff.

"The car keys," said Jo. "He must have seen you drop them."

"Well, what do you know!" said Cliff.

Mr. MacAfee felt quietly elated as he rode out of the yard on Jo's lap. The nice lady who owned the kennels watched them go, then turned to Fred, who was silent.

"Never in my life have I seen anything so amazing," she said. "He must have seen the keys drop, and decided to return them. He must have reasoned it out. What do you think, Fred?"

"I think"— said Fred —"I think I need a vacation."

LOVE is a strange and powerful influence, cogitated Mr. MacAfee. For thirty years he had considered any emotion a maudlin sign of weakness. Now, at the age of five months, he was very much in love with Cliff and Jo; not, however, with the blind adoration of a dog for his master and mistress, but rather with the protective affection of a father for his children. So it came as quite a shock to him when Cliff suggested that perhaps they could teach him some tricks.

Buffoonery was repugnant to Mr. McAfee. It scandalized his sense of dignity.

"Let's try," said Joe. "Won't it be fun if we can?"

She was sitting cross-legged on the floor, looking quizzically at Mr. MacAfee. She scratched his ears and smiled at Cliff, who came over and put one hand under Mr. MacAfee's chin.

"What do you think about it, old fellow?" he asked. "Will you learn to do some tricks for us?"

Mr. MacAfee let the full weight of his head rest in Cliff's hand and looked up into his questioning eyes. He thought again how much he liked Cliff. And Mr. MacAfee made the first completely unselfish decision of his two lives. If it would give them pleasure, he would subordinate his own feelings. He gave a bark.

Cliff's whole face broke into a grin. "He says yes."

"Let's teach him to sit up first," said Jo.

MR. MACAFEE lay in his basket in the kitchenette, pondering the difficulties of muscular control. Cliff had placed him in a corner, said, "Sit up, boy," and raised his front feet off the floor until he was sitting on his haunches. Even the two walls failed to keep him upright, as he collapsed slowly like a deflating tire. After several tries, he managed to hold his position for a second or two. Cliff and Jo were encouraged by his willingness, but Mr. MacAfee was chagrined by his clumsiness.

In the faint light that filtered across the court he could make out the kitchen clock. It was nine minutes after one. Cliff and Jo would surely be asleep by this time. He climbed out of his basket. There was a ribbon of gray light in the east when he climbed back in again, self-confident about the surprise he would have for them.

When Cliff brought him in from his prebreakfast walk, Jo looked at both of them anxiously. "How did he seem?" she asked.

"Chipper as a chipmunk," said Cliff. "There's nothing wrong with him."

"It's the first time I've ever had to wake him up. I thought he must be ill." She passed Cliff the toast.

Mr. MacAfee loved toast. Cliff always pretended not to notice him until he had taken a bite. Then he would look down, appear surprised to see him there, and ask him if he could put up with a small bit? This was the moment Mr. MacAfee was

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waiting for. He sat erect on his haunches; then, curling his head forward, he turned a slow, rolling somersault.

The coffee cup in Cliff's hand remained suspended between the table and his lips as he stared at Mr. MacAfee. The percolator froze in Jo's hand. Her eyes were wide, incredulous. She spoke first!

"Do you suppose he could do it again?"

Mr. MacAfee repeated, complete with somersault.

Jo swept him into her lap, her hands under his front legs, her face close to his. She looked him straight in the eyes, then she looked at Cliff.

"He's been practicing. Last night. It must have taken him hours. That's why he was so sleepy this morning."

"Do you think we ought to set a place for him at the table?" said Cliff.

MR. MACAFEE'S second birthday fell on a Saturday, so Cliff was home all day. Jo left at noon to attend a luncheon and bridge. Shortly after, Cliff asked Mr. MacAfee:

"What do we do about lunch, old man? Cook our own or go to the Dutchman's?"

Mr. MacAfee liked the Dutchman's, especially on Saturdays, when the commuting crowd wasn't there. Gus, the proprietor, would probably slide into their booth and have a glass of beer with them. Mr. MacAfee wiggled with pleasant anticipation as he went to the door.

"The Dutchman's it is," said Cliff.

As they reached their table, a voice in the next booth said, "Hello, Cliff." It was John Borrell, head of the firm where Cliff worked.

"What in the world brings you in town on Saturday?" Cliff asked.

"We're taking in a matinee while my wife entertains the Woman's Club." Mr. Borrell introduced the man opposite him. "This is Mr. Dorgan, a classmate of mine at Dartmouth. Haven't seen him in ten years, so we're making up for lost time."

"Nice dog you've got there," said Mr. Dorgan, patting Mr. MacAfee.

"Why don't you sit here with us?" said Mr. Borrell. "We've just ordered."

Cliff gave his order. Gus wandered over and hovered a moment, undecided, then said to Cliff, "The new equipment's in the kitchen. Want to see it?"

Cliff rose and said, "Will you excuse me for a few minutes? The arrival of this new equipment is quite an occasion. We've been talking about it for months."

Gus's face beamed with pleasure as he led the way through the swinging kitchen door.

"Personable young man," said Mr. Dorgan. "Does he sell kitchen equipment?"

"He works for me," said Mr. Borrell. "I doubt if he cares a tinker's dam about kitchen equipment, but he knows it will please Gus to look at it. He's that way, and people love him for it."

Mr. MacAfee placed his head on Mr. Borrell's foot. Borrell's a fine man, he mused, and he heads a fine concern, one Cliff can always respect and be proud of.

"He looks like a smart young man," said Mr. Dorgan.

"I'm making him a junior partner the first of the year," said Mr. Borrell. "He doesn't know about it, so don't say anything. I'm going to tell him the day before Christmas."

"That should make quite a Christmas for him," said Mr. Dorgan.

Mr. MacAfee was elated. He felt almost drunk with pride. He wanted to bound into Mr. Borrell's lap and embrace him. Instead, he leaped to the seat beside him and held out his right paw.

EARLY December found the city in the midst of its first snowfall. Mr. MacAfee sat in the living-room window. It was time for Cliff to arrive, and he mentally checked off another day, one day nearer to Christmas Eve when Cliff would know about the junior partnership. He heard his step in the hall and ran to meet him.

Cliff was too casual to fool either Mr. MacAfee or Jo. But she waited until they were having coffee in the living room before she said, "Suppose you tell me. I know you're dying to."

"How'd you know?" Cliff asked.

"Ever since you came in, you've been exuding little rays of excitement. Come on, give!"

"Who do you think I had lunch with?" Cliff asked.

"The mayor," said Jo.

"No."

"The President of the United States."

"No."

"I give up."

"Mr. J. V. Murton of Murton, Maynard and Drake."

"What did the nice man want?" asked Jo.

"He wants your husband," Cliff said, "at twice the salary he's making now."

Mr. MacAfee sat up in alarm. He looked from Cliff to Jo and back again, anxiety in his brown eyes.

Jo got up and sat on the floor beside Cliff, one hand on his knee. "Cliff, we could buy the farm," she said quietly.

"Uh-huh."

"Do you want to make a change?"

"Mr. Murton's dropping in tonight for my decision."

"What are you going to tell him?"

For the first time, Mr. MacAfee wished he had the power of speech. If he could only shout, "Tell him NO!" If he could only let Cliff know that Murton, Maynard and Drake were unscrupulous, unprincipled; that Cliff would either have to become like them or leave, and either way the experience would leave him embittered, cynical, never again the same lovable Cliff. If he could only say, "Cliff, that firm used to be known as Murton and MacAfee, until I shot myself because my own partner framed me to keep his dissolute nephew, Drake, from going to jail."

Cliff pulled Jo up onto his lap. "Mr. Murton wants you to be in on the decision," he said.

"He sounds considerate," said Jo.

He's a rat! thought Mr. MacAfee.

"I'll tell you what let's do, hon. You listen to Mr. Murton's whole proposition. If it sounds good to you, you get out of your chair and sit beside me on the floor. If it's no change, stay put."

Jo took his hand. "This should be your decision, Cliff, not mine."

Cliff smiled. "I'm impatient to see how you look in mink. My mind's made up. I just want to see if your woman's intuition will change it or not."

Mr. MacAfee stretched out with his head between his paws and prayed. The bell rang. Cliff opened the door for Mr. Murton.

He still knows how to be ingratiating, thought Mr. MacAfee an hour later. He's winning Jo with his charm before he broaches business.

Finally he came to it! "I've always contended the wife should be co-maker of any decision that affects her husband's future, because it's her future too." Mr. Murton beamed at Jo. "Now, here's what we have to offer that husband of yours."

He mentioned the immediate fancy figure they would pay, and described a future that sounded like a prospectus for a phony gold mine.

"It's only three weeks to the first of the year," said Jo. "Is that enough notice to give his present concern?"

Mr. Murton reassured her: "When you make up your mind to leave, the best policy is to leave as quickly as possible."

Mr. MacAfee watched in desperation as she got out of her chair and sat at Cliff's feet. "After all, it's Cliff's decision," she said.

BEFORE Cliff could make it, Mr. MacAfee had an idea. He stood in front of Jo and barked, walked over to Mr. Murton, came back, sat up and did his somersault.

Cliff explained to Mr. Murton, "He wants to do his tricks for you. He'd sulk if you didn't see them. He always does them for guests."

Mr. Murton despised dogs, but he was too good a business man to let these dog lovers know it.

"I'd like very much to see them," he said. The decision could wait a few minutes; his enthusiasm for the canine performance might even clinch it.

"You mustn't forget to applaud," said Jo.

Mr. MacAfee had learned a routine that never failed to amaze his audience. He wasn't interested in amazing this audience, however, though he did each trick perfectly. He was waiting for the climax, the trick that Cliff always claimed proved that a dog could understand what was said to him and reason things out from there.

"I won't mention any names," said Cliff, "but somewhere in this room is a person with gray hair and a gold signet ring on the little finger of the left hand. Can you find that person?"

Mr. MacAfee walked slowly, looking at hair and hands. He stopped in front of Mr. Murton, who applauded vigorously.

"That's right," said Cliff. "Now show him how much you like him."

That was the cue. Whenever given Mr. MacAfee was supposed to jump into the person's lap, put his forepaws around the person's neck, and snuggle against the person's cheek.

TONIGHT was different. Mr. Murton felt no warm paws around his neck. What he did feel sent a shudder of horror through him. He looked down quickly. Mr. MacAfee, close against him, was standing on three legs, his hind leg lifted.

Mr. Murton let his rage ruin his judgment just long enough to kick Mr. MacAfee completely across the living room. Mr. MacAfee let out one yelp as the shoe struck him and another as he struck the bookcase. He fell facing the door, so though he couldn't move, he saw Cliff holding it open, his face white, his fist clenched.

"Get out!" Cliff said. "Get out quick, before I forget myself and hit an old man."

"I withdraw my offer," said Mr. Murton.

"I wouldn't work for you if it was the last job on earth!" said Cliff, slamming the door after him.

Mr. MacAfee was blissfully happy, though he found it difficult to breathe. It worked, he thought. I was sure I could rely on Murton's hair-trigger temper.

Jo was on her knees beside him. "Get Dr. Waters quickly, Cliff," she sobbed. "I'm afraid he's frightfully hurt."

When Dr. Waters got up from examining Mr. MacAfee, he shook his head. "I'm afraid he can't last long. The broken ribs have punctured his lungs."

So this is it? thought Mr. MacAfee. "I hope I've done a better job than last time."

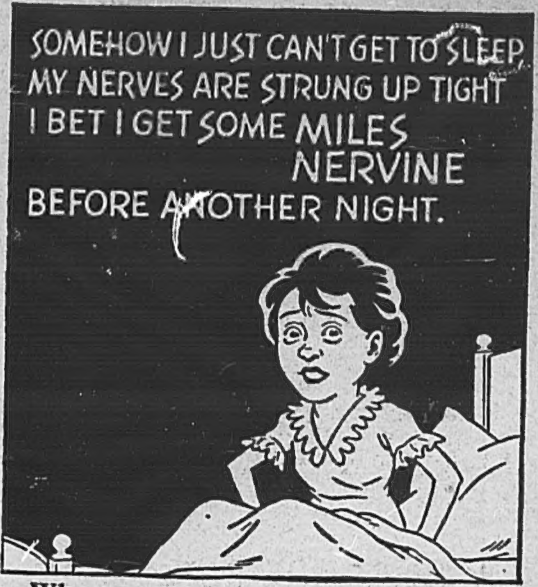
Jo had his head in her lap. Cliff was sitting on the floor beside her, gently stroking Mr. MacAfee's ears. Tears were rolling down their cheeks.

Mr. MacAfee looked up at both of them affectionately. They'll be all right, now, he thought, though I would like to have been here for the Christmas Eve celebration.

Cliff put a supporting arm around Jo. In a shaky voice he said, "If dogs go to heaven, we'll see him there some day."

You'll get a surprise when you do, thought Mr. MacAfee as he closed his eyes and, for the second time in his life, passed out of this world.

THE END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JAN. 11, 1947

PAUL HUNTER
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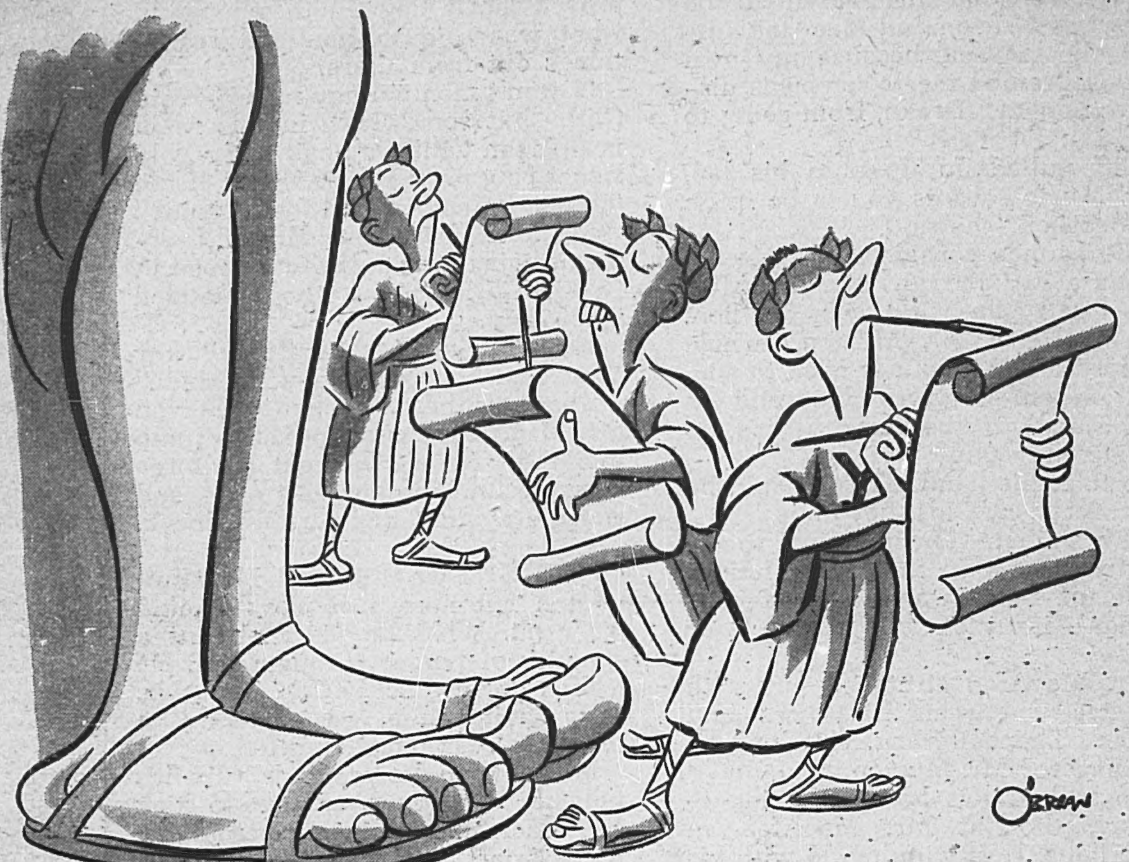


The bright young men who speak for Henry Luce—and God.

TIME WISECRACKS ON!

ANKLE-DEEP in bright young men are the plush offices in Rockefeller Center where man-of-destiny Henry R. (for instance) Luce directs the operation of his publishing empire. Fox-eyed, sparse-domed Emperor Luce's penchant for staffing his Life, Time, Fortune, etc., with bright young men has brought success in capital letters. How much of this is attributable to the B. Y. M. themselves and how much to the older and wiser heads in the organization is an open question. Certain it is the shrewd, behind-scenes Luce executives possess a marvelous promotion sense and an instinct for connecting up with the right people, both financially and otherwise.

But it's the bright young men who make the magazines and instill into their pages most of the virtues and faults of youth. The Luce publications are alert, breezy, ubiquitous, energetic, precocious, and interesting. They are also presumptuous, cynical, impetuous, intolerant, prejudiced, exhibitionist, and inaccurate. Time Magazine, which purports to present news, prints much that is neither informative, constructive, nor factual. In short, much of it isn't news at all but merely journalistic exhibitionism or, more simply, smart-aleckness.

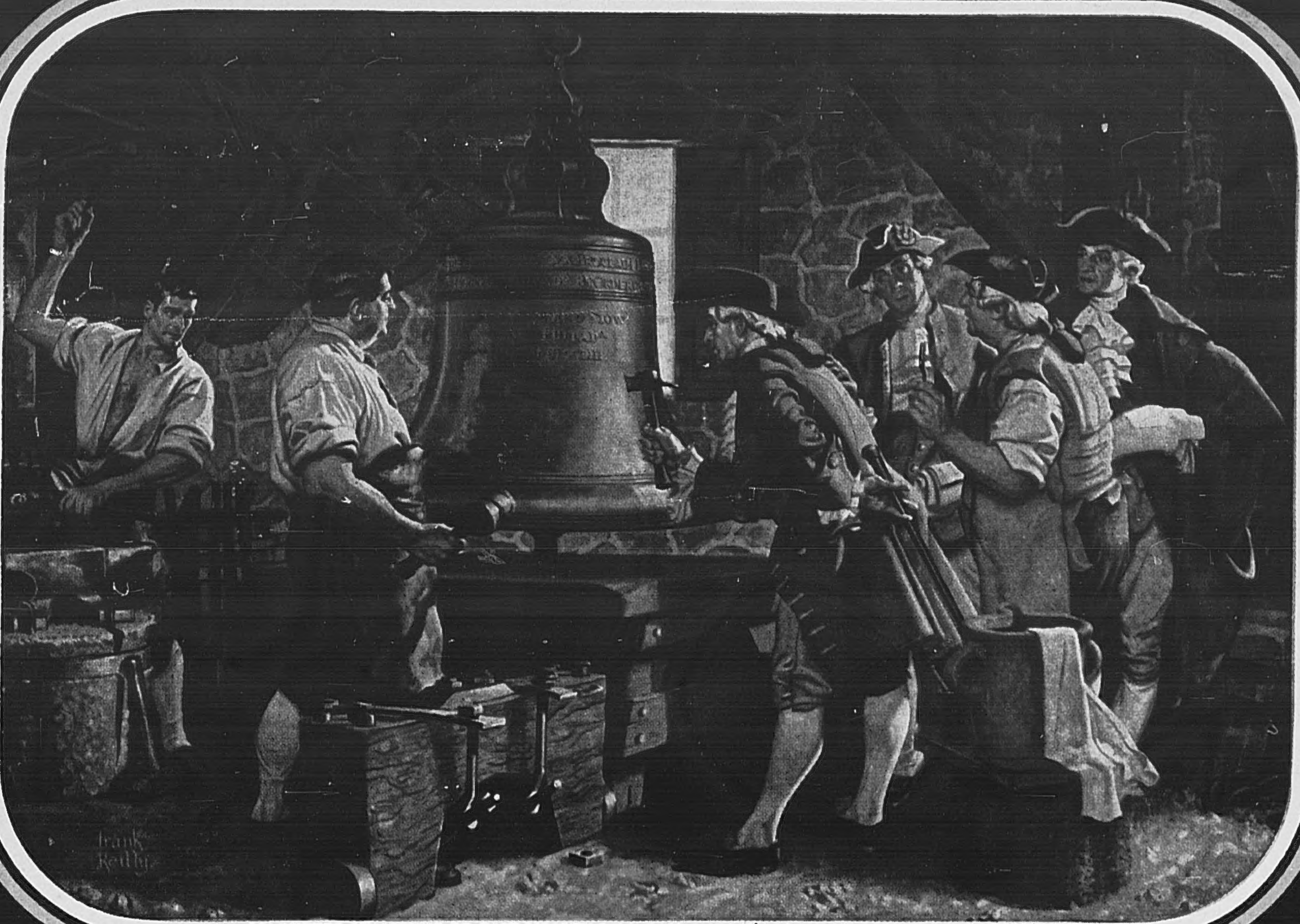
The Luce magazines nevertheless are responsible for numerous journalistic achievements—at least it is generally so believed, though at the moment we can't recall any. Life does succeed in getting itself banned now and then in benighted areas, and Time has been denounced frequently in the highest places. Much of this denunciation stems from its chronic inaccuracy. Often Time is compelled to devote fully three fourths of its letters column to the correction of past misstatements. But many people become bored and irritated with Time because of its insufferable smugness, its habit of regarding all humanity except, of course, its own bright young men, as moronic, venal, and practically hopeless. Time never ceases to be enthralled with its own cleverness at mangling the English language (Time-style it's called) or at describing individuals as spraddle-pratted, moose-tall, duck-shaped, etc., often to their acute embarrassment. No group of young men, no matter how bright, can have quite the Godlike qualities which Time allocates to itself. Nor can they speak for God, as Time's young men unhesitatingly presume to do on occasion.

But beyond question, Emperor Luce has power. His magazines are feared by the high-placed and the low. Few indeed are the public officials, military brass hats, labor czars, or plain citizens intrepid enough to throw Time reporters out of their offices. On the other hand, few welcome them. Time has demonstrated all too often the harm it can do through its preference for the poor pun and the snide wisecrack over straightforward factual reporting.

The need of today is for a constructive, hopeful, and accurate journalism so that people may be stimulated to the faith and belief in human progress without which no solution of the troubles which beset us is possible. It is to be hoped that as Luce's young men grow older they will find themselves able to adopt a more inspiring outlook and be less inclined to cater to the disillusionment and cynicism which grip the mass mind today.

Paul Hunter

Liberty
...THE PRESERVATION OF FREEDOM IS THIS MAGAZINE'S PURPOSE

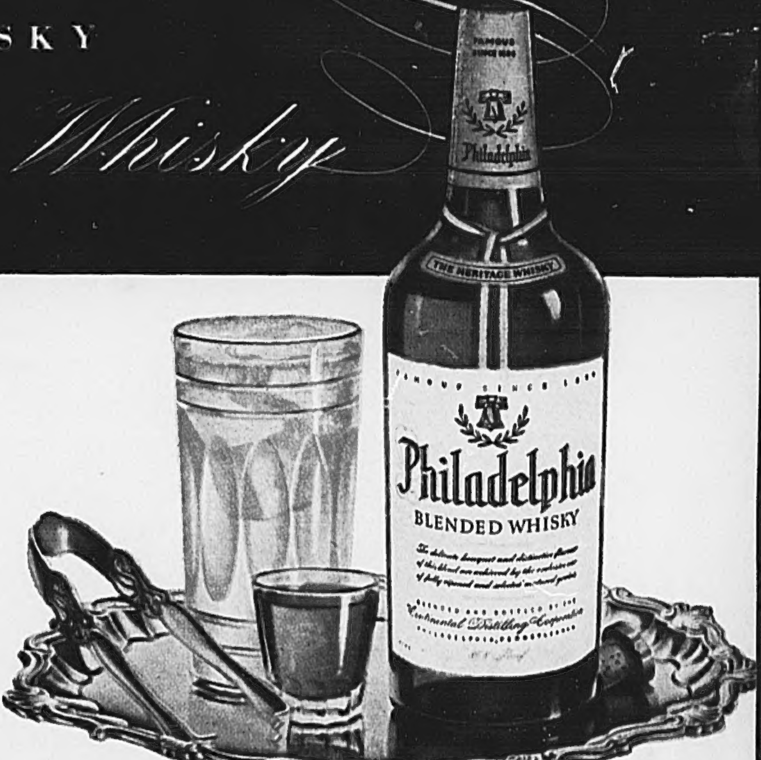

frank Reilly

COMMITTEE EXAMINING RE-CAST LIBERTY BELL, PASS & STOW'S FOUNDRY, PHILADELPHIA, 1753*

Philadelphia

BLENDED WHISKY

The Heritage Whisky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